



ENTERTAINMENT / G1

Marry a Filipino,
Matt Monro
advised his son

BUSINESS / B1

DMCI group, Metro Pacific
Holdings win bid for \$447.23-M
government stake in Maynilad

WORLD / A28

Military overthrows
Fiji government,
ousts prime minister

WORLD / A28

Controversial US
envoy to the United
Nations quits

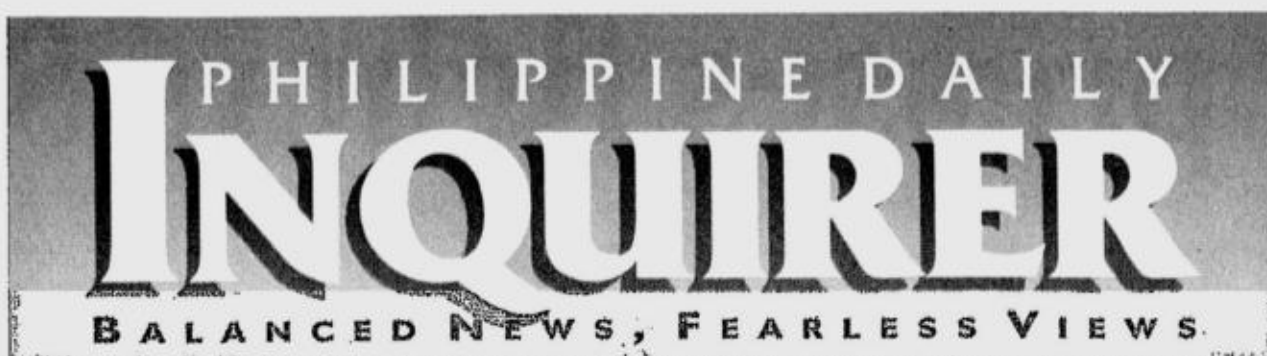
How 2 men escaped from Catanduanes

By Cyril L. Bonabente
Inquirer Research

AN ARCHITECT AND HIS SUBCONTRACTOR LEFT Metro Manila for Virac, Catanduanes, on Nov. 27 with one goal in mind—to supervise the construction of a house for Catholic priests.

Little did they know the biggest challenge they would have to face was returning home alive.

HOW 2 MEN/ A21



Wednesday, December 6, 2006

★★

7 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 361

P18

website: www.inq7.net

Man, 2 sons adrift for 18 hours saved by boat seat

By Job B. Belen
Inquirer Southern Luzon

TABAGO CITY—A WOODEN SEAT FROM A wrecked motorized boat they found while adrift at sea saved a municipal councilor, his two sons and a man when Super typhoon "Reming" hit the island-municipality of Rapu-Rapu, Albay.

Councilor Noel Dagsil, 55, his sons Jayson, 29,

MAN, 2 SONS/ A21

Velarde vows to stop Con-ass; House changes rule

By Juliet Labog-Javellana
and Michael Lim Ubac

EL SHADDAI LEADER BRO. MARIANO "Mike" Velarde vowed to block the Charter change (Cha-cha) train without the Senate on board even as Malacañang's allies in the House of Representatives struck down a rule providing for a two-chamber action on proposals to revise the Constitution.

"The people won't allow it and I, for one, will be openly against it," the leader

of the Catholic charismatic movement with 4 million followers said of the House move to convene a Senate-less constituent assembly (Con-ass) to change the Constitution.

Velarde warned that a Con-ass without the Senate—many of whose members oppose it—would create a constitutional crisis.

"I don't think the Senate will take it sitting down," he said in an interview with the INQUIRER the other day.

Sweeping aside objections from opposition lawmakers and using their overwhelming numbers, the House majority last night removed a major stumbling block to the convening of the Con-ass, if possible, starting today.

With powerful Malacañang backing, the House majority aims to dismantle the 19-year-old Constitution which provides for a presidential form of government and set up a parliamentary unicameral system that would, in effect, abolish the

Senate along with the House.

By a 161 to 25 vote, with no abstentions, the majority changed House Rule 5 by striking out its second sentence which reads: "The adoption of resolutions proposing amendments to or revision of the Constitution shall follow the procedure for the enactment of bills."

That sentence, in effect, means that any House resolution to change the Charter must have corresponding action from



VELARDE VOWS/ A8

VELARDE to mobilize members

US tells RP: Give us Smith

Judge says he's waiting for RP-US agreement

By Nikko Dizon
and Tarra V. Quismundo

IN A NOTE VERBALE sent yesterday to the Department of Foreign Affairs, the US Embassy sought custody of the American Marine convicted on Monday of raping a Filipino woman and now being held in a cell at the Makati City Jail (MCJ).

Makati Judge Benjamin Pozon reiterated that the incarceration of Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith was merely "temporary" and subject to the agreement of the two governments on the matter.

"For me [Smith's detention at the MCJ] is just temporary, and if there is already an agreement [between] the Philippines and the United States, so be it," Pozon told the INQUIRER when asked about the custody issue.

"It's between our country and the United States, so when they decide at what facility Smith should serve his sentence pending appeal, of course the court will abide with that," he said.

Rafael Seguis, foreign under-

US TELLS/ A22



THE ACCUSED, THE ACCUSER: Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith (left): Still numb and stunned by the verdict. Nicole at a press conference on Tuesday admits that "I do pity him, he's so young." She still shuns photographers.

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

US Marine 'stunned;' CBCP cites lessons

By Christian V. Esguerra

HE COULD NOT BELIEVE THE decision and it left him "numb and stunned."

That was how Fr. James Reuter, SJ, described Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith's reaction when he visited the American Marine soon after a Makati court convicted him of raping "Nicole" and sentenced him to 40 years in jail at the maximum.

"He still can't believe the decision," the 90-year-old Roman Catholic priest and spiritual adviser to Smith, 21, told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Another Church leader said the Subic rape drama offered lessons to Filipinos.

Women, most especially, should be taught that "womanhood is precious and noble, so it is not right for them to be flaunting it around," said Archbishop Oscar Cruz of Lingayen-Dagupan.

"They should not make themselves appear cheap and practically inviting to be violated by men," he said.

US MARINE/ A4

Pozon on historic case: I'm a father, too

By Tarra V. Quismundo
and DJ Yap

THE MEDIA-SHY JUDGE STOOD smiling by the half-open door to his chambers, looking entirely different from the stern-faced man behind the bench who stirred emotions on Monday

when he convicted a young US Marine of rape.

It was the first time a Philippine court had convicted a US serviceman of a heinous crime since the country ratified the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) which provides legal protection to US troops engaged in

joint military exercises in the Philippines.

Judge Benjamin Pozon looked refreshed, as though he had finally enjoyed some shuteye, when he spoke with the media for a few minutes yesterday afternoon.

Indeed, Pozon told a few reporters who had waited for his

chambers to open that he had "slept somewhat more soundly" on Monday night. "Of course, I had constantly worried if what I would do was right ... But then, of course, I did everything that I could."

The 54-year-old presiding POZON/ A5

Dark, silent Christmas for Bicol typhoon victims

By Ephraim Aguilar,
Bobby Labalan
and Juan Escandor Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

"WE DO NOT KNOW HOW TO start again," was the common lamentation among typhoon victims in Albay province's capital city of Legazpi, as they cried for basic necessities like food, water, clothing and shelter.

Indeed, a dark, bleak Christmas awaits residents of Albay, Catanduanes and other parts of the Bicol

region who survived Super typhoon "Reming" on Nov. 30.

The region of 4.6 million people is still without power, with downed transmission pylons lying unattended next to the highways.

In her five-hour visit to Camarines Sur and Albay yesterday, President Macapagal-Arroyo ordered government agencies to stop all their finger-pointing and ensure that no communities affected by Reming would be left "isolated and hungry."

Reming (international code

name: Durian), now downgraded to a tropical storm, continued with its deadly course overnight, lashing the coast of southern Vietnam, where officials said at least 23 people had died and more were missing.

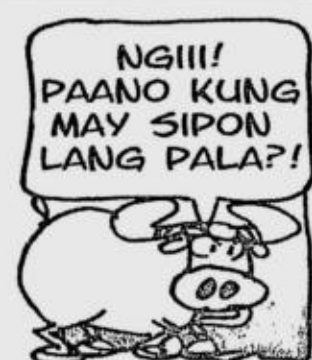
Power facilities in Albay, valued at about P200 million, were destroyed and restoring power may take more than six months, according to Alex Realozza, general manager of Albay Electric Cooperative (Aleco).

But Glen Rabonza, executive DARK/ A21



COMFORTER IN CHIEF: President Arroyo puts her arms around a typhoon victim in Legazpi City on Tuesday. Ms Arroyo distributed relief goods, ordered faster recovery efforts and consoled the survivors.

AP



Smell test developed to determine insanity

SYDNEY—AN INNOVATIVE "scratch and smell" test promises to become a powerful new tool for sniffing out mental illness before the onset of symptoms, Australian researchers said on Tuesday.

SMELL TEST/ A21

Images of utter despair move veteran photojournalist to tears

By Volt Contreras

THERE ARE IMAGES—WITH stories behind them—that move even veteran photojournalists to tears.

One of the award-winning INQUIRER photographers captured one such picture while covering the still unending catastrophe brought by Super typhoon "Reming" to Bicolandia.

Though he knew it could not

be published for being utterly morbid, Edwin Bacasmas says he just had to take the photo "for myself." The shot was of naked corpses, numbering 45, lying on a sidewalk.

He cast that image in predawn darkness, he explains, with the only "available light" coming from the generator-powered fluorescent lamp of a nearby funeral parlor to where the pile of bodies led.

It was a "street scene" in Guinobatan, Albay, one of the towns around Mayon volcano worst hit by mudslides triggered by Reming last week.

Bacasmas now considers it "the largest number of corpses I have ever seen collected in one place" throughout his 12-year career.

He had to make that gory approximation, if only to under-

IMAGES/ A21

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The eastern sections of Luzon and Visayas and the whole of Mindanao will have cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms becoming widespread rains over Aurora and Eastern Mindanao. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/12/05/06 SOURCE PAGASA

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONT PAGE

Text us your feedback: Inquirer news name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laosag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Taytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Lagay	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Miriam presses fight vs SC

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

PURSUING HER FIGHT against the Judicial and Bar Council (JBC) which had dropped her from its list of candidates for Supreme Court Chief Justice, Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago yesterday urged President Macapagal-Arroyo not to appoint a permanent replacement for Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban but a temporary one when the latter retires tomorrow.

In a letter to the President, which she read into the Senate record, Santiago said Ms Arroyo should appoint an acting Chief Justice because the judiciary's nomination process was a failure and was tainted with corruption.

Santiago was to take her battle to Malacañang last night, where she was to meet with the President.

Santiago also advised Ms Arroyo not to appoint Associate Justice Reynato Puno Chief Justice, despite the latter being the most senior of the four candidates for the position.

"If you were to appoint Mr. Puno, the public will suspect—with good



MOOD SWING. From frothing in the mouth to laughing heartily, Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago shows how quickly her mood can change. Sharing the light moment with her yesterday, a day after her angry tirade against the Supreme Court, is Sen. Lito Lapid.

ROGER MARGALLO

reason—that he had unlawfully promised to decide in favor of the administration the controversial imminent case on the constitutionality of a constituent assembly (Con-ass). Thus, the Supreme Court and the constituent assembly would both lose all credibility," Santiago said.

The woman senator was referring to the battle for Con-ass in Congress that the Arroyo administration was still fighting for in order to amend the Constitution despite having lost the case in the Panganiban Supreme Court.

Santiago instead suggested that an incumbent justice who was not on the short list of nominees be ap-

pointed acting Chief Justice until a "valid nomination process" could be undertaken. She said she would withdraw her own nomination if there were such another screening.

"I will ask the President when I see her [tonight] to appoint an acting Chief Justice. I'm going to tell her the JBC has lost all logic, all reason (for its existence)," Santiago told reporters.

On Monday, a seething Santiago had made mincemeat of Panganiban and the JBC in a cardiac-inducing privilege speech after the JBC had dropped her and Justice Antonio Carpio from the short list of nominees for Chief Justice.

A furious Santiago tagged Pan-

ganiban as the mastermind of a "thinly-veiled" plot to drop her from contention because she was a Supreme Court outsider. She said she was also excluded because ex-Senate President Jovito Salonga, Panganiban's former boss, was Ms Arroyo's nemesis.

In her letter to the President, Santiago told Ms Arroyo the nomination process was attended by irregularities and should be repeated.

She narrated how Panganiban had forced her to waive her public interview by the JBC after the five incumbent justices who were also candidates refused to submit to the process.

"I did not spontaneously waive my right... I was compelled to do so," she said, adding that after she did not go through with the interview, the eight JBC members went to see her in the holding room to thank her for her "cooperation."

Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan and Sen. Edgardo Angara, however, expressed reservations about Santiago's proposal to appoint an acting Chief Justice.

Pangilinan, ex-officio member of the JBC, said having an acting Chief Justice would place him or her in a situation where pressure could be applied on them by Malacañang if they wanted to keep their jobs.

Angara said there was no precedent for an acting Chief Justice and this should be avoided for the sake of stability in the judiciary.

For its part, Supreme Court spokesperson Ismael Khan Jr. said the high tribunal was unfazed by Santiago's tirade because the court was more credible than the senator.

Khan said the court would rather leave it to the public to decide on Defensor's accusations.

"Well, it will depend on how the public will react to that," he said.

Admitting Defensor's remarks were "uncalled for," including describing members of the tribunal as "idiots," Khan said the Supreme Court was not bound to react on them because they were uttered during a privilege speech delivered in the Senate.

"Whether the court feels maligned or not, it will depend on how the people will take it," he said.

With Armand N. Nocum

Deadline nears for Disini deposits

By Norman Bordadora

MORE THAN \$4 MILLION IN Swiss bank accounts alleged to be part of the ill-gotten wealth of Marcos crony Herminio Disini will soon be freed from a 20-year freeze order unless the Presidential Commission on Good Government succeeds in securing a forfeiture order from the Sandiganbayan.

The Swiss Federal Court has given the Philippine government only until Dec. 31 to secure a forfeiture decision from the Sandiganbayan First Division looking into the alleged ill-gotten assets of Disini, a crony of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos and the dealmaker of the country's worst debt nightmare, the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant.

After Dec. 31, if no forfeiture order is handed down by a Philippine court, the Swiss Supreme Court will revoke the block on the accounts of Liliana and Herminio Disini, said the Swiss Federal Court's resolution released last August.

Disini's wife, Paciencia Escolin-Disini, and daughter, Lea Disini, filed a request to lift the freeze order on the Swiss bank accounts before the Swiss Supreme Court on Dec. 12, 2005.

The PCGG, represented by lawyer Sergio Salvoni before the Swiss high tribunal, said it was aware of the Disini family's legal moves to have the freeze order lifted.

The Swiss Supreme Court told the Philippine government that blocking the Disini accounts beyond 20 years may already be "a disproportionate limitation of the appellants' ownership rights and a violation of the precept of expeditionness in the Swiss judicial assistance proceeding."

The Office of the Solicitor General filed last Nov. 30 an urgent manifestation and motion seeking an early resolution of certain issues and the setting of a date for the initial presentation of evidence by the government in the case against Disini that was filed with the Sandiganbayan way back in 1987.

But the case is still in the pre-trial stage and a decision for a forfeiture is not expected within the month.

Mike A back at Palace, 'healthier and stronger'

By Christine O. Avendaño

THREE DAYS AFTER UNDERGOING an angioplasty to unclog an artery, First Gentleman Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo was back at Malacañang yesterday, with his doctors advising him not to engage in any stressful activities for one week.

But the First Gentleman should be well enough to join his wife, President Macapagal-Arroyo, this weekend in Cebu for the 12th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) summit, his chief of staff

Juris Soliman said in a phone interview.

Soliman said Mike Arroyo would be part of a program for the spouses of the 16 state leaders attending the summit.

"Mr. Arroyo is expected to come out of the hospital much healthier and stronger than before," said the medical bulletin issued by St. Luke's Medical Center upon his discharge.

With President Arroyo away inspecting the damage wrought by Super typhoon "Reming" on the Bicol region, the First Gentleman was

accompanied home from the hospital by his children and grandchildren shortly after 11 a.m.

Hospital officials issued the medical bulletin saying they were "forced to do" to "set the record straight" on the First Gentleman's five-day confinement that was attended by "misconceptions or inaccurate information coming out in broadcast and print media."

Mike Arroyo checked into St. Luke's on Dec. 1. The previous week, he and the President had spent the night at the hospital undergoing executive checkups.

On his confinement, his family refused to talk about his medical condition. All Malacañang would say was that it was not the President who needed hospital care but her husband.

Sources, however, said the First Gentleman had a "heart-related" problem and may have needed to undergo an angioplasty. This was later confirmed by his younger brother, Rep. Ignacio "Iggy" Arroyo.

The medical procedure, where a balloon-tipped catheter is inserted through the groin and into the diseased artery, was done to "help pre-

vent the artery from narrowing again," Dr. Juliet Gopez-Cervantes, the President's medical team spokesperson and a liver specialist, said.

She said the procedure which was conducted on Dec. 3 lasted less than an hour and was a "complete success."

The only other medical bulletin the hospital had issued on Mike Arroyo had said that tests had shown that he had "coronary artery disease involving the narrowing of the left anterior descending coronary artery."

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House to pursue expulsion case against Cayetano

USING THEIR NUMERICAL MIGHT, THE majority in the House ethics committee yesterday voted to pursue a formal investigation into the expulsion case against Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano, saying the First Family had submitted enough "substantial and credible evidence" to pursue the complaint against the Taguig-Pateros legislator.

Voting 27 to 7, the committee decided to end its initial review of the charges that members of the First Family, led by First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, filed against Cayetano and to proceed to the "investigation proper."

The committee also voted down an omnibus motion from Cayetano—that the committee reconsider its decision that it had jurisdiction over the case, to defer the hearing and for the committee to issue subpoenas to the personalities and institutions involved.

The complainants—the First Gentleman, his brother Negros Occidental Rep. Ignacio Arroyo, his eldest son Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel Arroyo and his younger son Diosdado Arroyo—submitted their evidence to the committee.

Cayetano was given until last Monday to submit his "controverting" evidence but failed to do so, filing instead his omnibus motion.

'No evidence'

Cayetano did not attend the hearing yesterday as he was at a hearing of the congressional bicameral conference committee on the proposed election automation law.

South Cotabato Rep. Darlene Antonino-Custodio said Cayetano could not submit his evidence as he was given copies of the Arroyos' evidence only last Monday.

"There was nothing for him to controvert," Antonio said.

She explained that Cayetano was also asking the committee to help by issuing the subpoenas so he could gather more evidence.

But Iggy Arroyo pointed out that Cayetano has claimed that he had the necessary evidence when he made the allegations that a member of the First Family was maintaining millions of dollars in deposits in a German bank.

Philip C. Tubeza

Koreans favor OFWs

ALTHOUGH OVERSEAS Filipino workers are the No. 1 choice of employers in South Korea, many OFWs don't get the job because they are unable to pass the Korean Language Test.

Cho Byung Gie, director of the Foreign Workers Employment Assistance Team of the Korean Human Resources Development Service, said Filipinos are the nationality of choice of many employers in his country.

Cho and other South Korean labor officials were in Manila

recently to look at how their country's Employment Permit System was being implemented here. The EPS is a government-to-government arrangement between the two countries for the deployment of OFWs.

Since the start of the EPS in April 2004, more than 20,000 jobs have been offered to Filipino applicants, but only 14,256 were able to go to Korea, according to the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration.

Jerome Aning

No Christmas ceasefire—Esperon

By Dona Pazzibugan

ARMED FORCES CHIEF OF STAFF Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. has indicated he will not recommend a Christmas ceasefire with communist New People's Army rebels this year.

Esperon expressed his view against the traditional Christmas ceasefire when interviewed by reporters during President Macapagal-Arroyo's visit to Legazpi City yesterday.

"There should be no ceasefire when it comes to terrorism," a

spokesperson quoted Esperon as saying.

"During the interview, Gen. Esperon said these NPA (rebels) are conducting terrorist activities so there should be no ceasefire with them," Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro told reporters in Camp Aguinaldo.

The NPA, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, is listed as a "foreign terrorist organization" by the United States, along with the extremist Abu Sayyaf Group based

in southern Mindanao and the Raja Solaiman Movement, a radical group of converts to Islam.

But the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) which has been waging a separatist war in Central Mindanao is not in the US terrorist list since the Philippine government is holding peace talks with them.

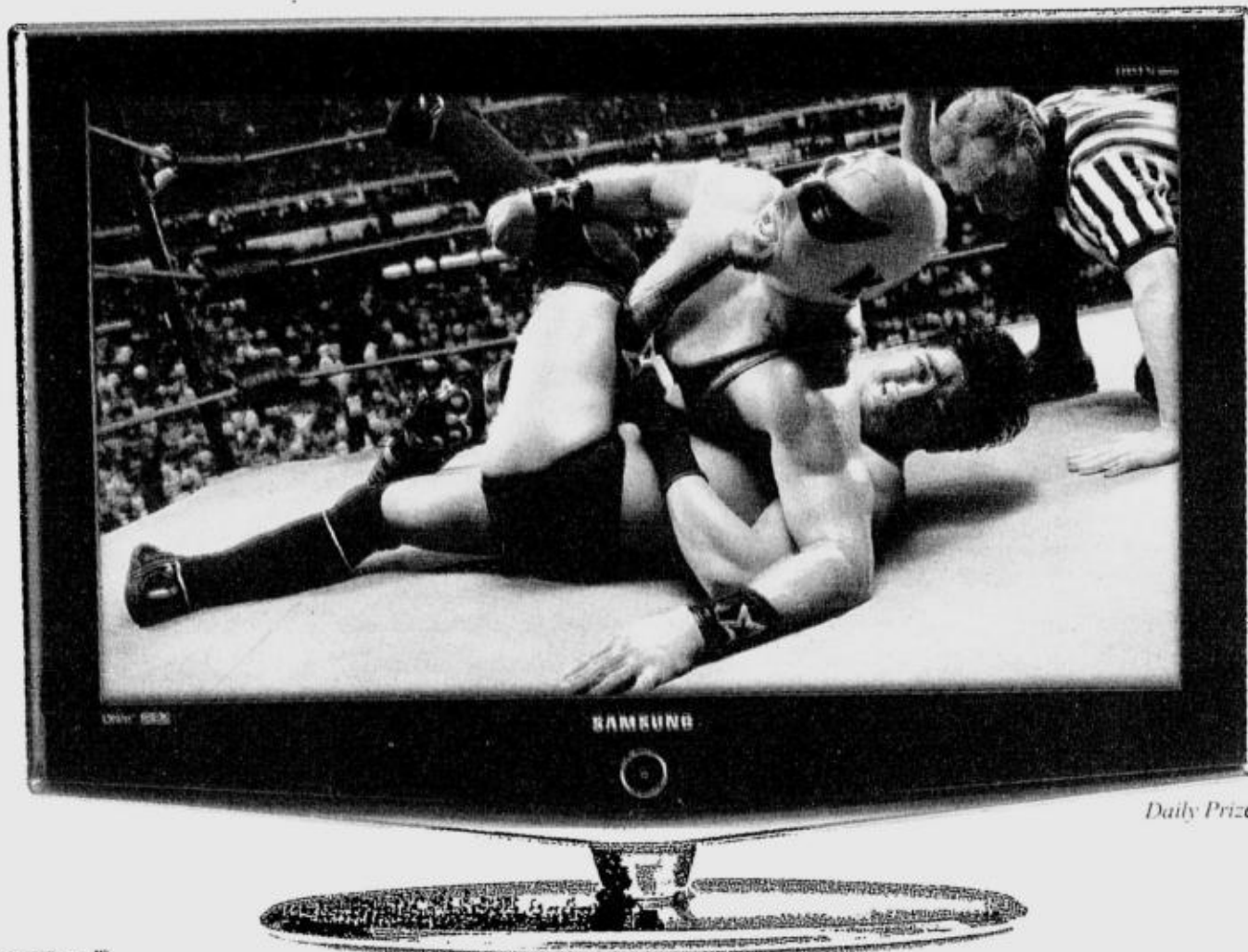
Last year, President Arroyo declared a four-day unilateral truce from Dec. 24 to 25, and Dec. 31 to Jan. 1 to observe the annual tradition that is meant to give sol-

diers and rebels a respite from fighting.

Malacañang usually relies on the military's recommendation whether to declare a unilateral ceasefire during the Christmas holidays.

Bacarro, however, added that the military will abide by whatever decision the President makes.

"He (Esperon) said if there is a political decision that there will be a truce, then we will abide with the provisions of the truce," Bacarro stressed.



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Numerous factors continually affect the skin as it matures, ranging from external ones (such as sun exposure and pollutants) to the natural aging process. Over time, as the skin is exposed to various elements, it may acquire blemishes. Dark spots, acne scars and other forms of pigmentation are examples of some imperfections the skin may experience as a result of aging.



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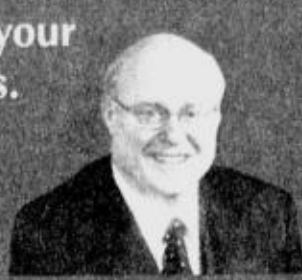
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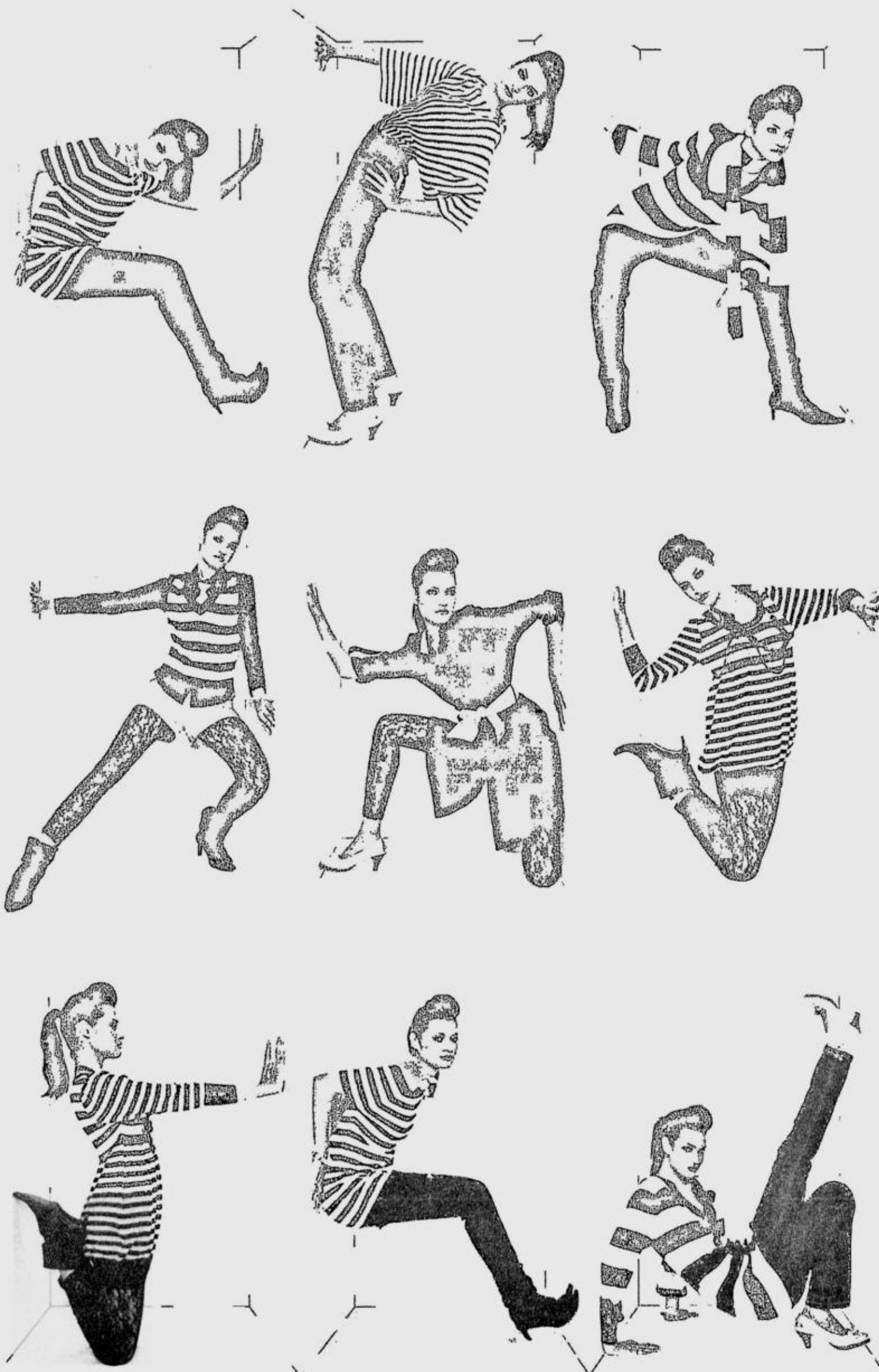
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REVERED Jesuit Fr. James Reuter SJ, a resident of the Philippines the past 60 years, and an honorary citizen, provided spiritual guidance to the four American Marines. He laments the guilty verdict on Smith as he's convinced that what happened between the accused and the accuser was consensual sex.

ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

HOLIDAY '06



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LANDMARK

US Marine ...

From page A1

Cruz said the rape case should also teach men to "understand that the moment they violate women, whether consensual or not, the consequence of the act is big."

Retribution will come

"They'll pay for it one way or another," he said.

The initial price Smith has to pay is temporary detention at the Makati City Jail where more than 600 suspected killers, robbers, swindlers and rapists are also detained.

Under Judge Benjamin Pozon's order, Smith will be held there until the Philippine and US governments agree on where to hold him pending the outcome of his legal appeal. (Story on Page A1.)

The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) offered its own view of the case.

Keeping one's dignity

"It's about respect for the Filipino women. It's about the dignity of the Philippines in the face of rich nations," Msgr. Pedro Quitorio, CBCP spokesperson, told the INQUIRER in a text message.

Cruz, a former CBCP president, appeared to agree.

He said that Filipinos, despite poverty, should "maintain our human dignity before any foreigner no matter how rich and influential they are."

"Before God, all of us are created equal," he said.

Another lesson that stood out in the case was that the "exploitation of women and children [is] one of the worst crimes of humanity, irrespective of color, race or creed," the archbishop said.

'Take care of Daniel'

"Such offenses cannot but deserve the biggest penalty allowed by law," Cruz said.

Smith's three coaccused—Lance Corporals Keith Silkwood and Dominic Duplantis, and Staff Sgt. Chad Carpentier—were acquitted and flew out of the country within hours of the court's verdict.

Reuter, who sent off the three soldiers at the airport, said they were neither bitter nor angry at Nicole.

"Please take care of Daniel," he quoted the soldiers as telling him before they boarded the plane.

Along with their convicted buddy, Silkwood, Duplantis and Carpentier hoped to become "stronger and better persons" after the controversy, according to Reuter.

A soldier's innocence

"Their reaction to the decision was very Christian," said Reuter, head of the Catholic Church's National Office of the Mass Media.

Reuter, who has been staying in the Philippines for more than 60 years, decried Pozon's decision, saying the judge disregarded the evidence presented by the defense that would have proven the soldier's innocence.

"I really don't think Daniel was guilty," he said. "The judge took every word of the prosecution as if it were gospel truth, but did not give a bit [of credence] to the words of the defense."

Reuter said he remained convinced that Smith didn't rape Nicole, that what they had was a "consensual" sexual act.

Nicole, a 23-year-old management accounting graduate, had accused Smith of raping her in a van at Subic Bay Freeport last year after they met in a nightclub, where she said she got intoxicated.

Correction

IN THE DEC. 3 ISSUE, an item in the Corrections box on Page A4 misspelled the first name of former President Elpidio Quirino's daughter who died of pneumonia in Amsterdam on Nov. 28. Her name is Victoria—not Victorina—Quirino-Delgado.

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph. Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Lorna Kalaw Tirol, readers' advocate, e-mail address: readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph or fax Nos. 897-47-93/94, Attn: Readers Advocate. Her phone number is 897-8808 Local 342.

Pozon on historic case: I'm a father, too

From page A1

judge of Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 139 spoke of his great relief: "Napakalaking tinik yung nabunot sa dibdib ko. I can now devote my time to deciding other cases."

In a landmark decision hailed by many and criticized by some, Pozon sentenced Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith, 21, to up to 40 years behind bars for raping Filipino complainant "Nicole" on board a moving van at the Subic Bay Freeport before midnight on Nov. 1, 2005.

But he acquitted Smith's coaccused—Lance Corporals Keith Silkwood and Dominic Duplantis and Staff Sgt. Chad Carpentier—saying the prosecution had not presented sufficient evidence to prove that the three had conspired with Smith to committing "bestial acts."

Very young

Deciding his first rape case was an emotional experience for the judge, who said he almost shed a tear while writing the historic decision.

"Both of them, the complainant and Smith, are very young. And I am a father, and I also have children, so it was really very hard to decide," said the father of three.

In fact, Smith's youth was also on 23-year-old Nicole's mind on Monday night.

"He's so young. He's almost my age. I'm not going to be a hypocrite—I do pity him," Nicole yesterday said at a press conference in Quezon City.

"If only he never did what he did to me, if he didn't abuse me, we wouldn't be in this situation," she said in Filipino.

Nicole said that hours after the decision was handed down, she found it hard to sleep and had to deal with mixed emotions.

She said Smith seemed far too young to waste decades of his life in jail. But at the same time, she said, she wondered how she would have felt if Pozon had acquitted Smith.

"That's what I kept thinking about the whole night," she said. "If he had been acquitted, then I am the one who would be pitied. But I'm only human. I felt sorry for him when I saw him."

But the Zamboanga City native was not talking forgiveness.

"I can't forgive him because I can't see his repentance. It's easy to say sorry, but it's useless if he doesn't mean it," she said.

"If he wants forgiveness, he should admit what he did to me and say that I was telling the truth, that I was not lying," she said.

Nicole also said she intended to visit Smith at his detention quarters in the Makati City Jail, just to make sure that he was not being accorded special treatment.

At the losing end

Flanked by her private lawyer Evalyn Ursua, her mother and her two brothers, Nicole thanked her supporters, the private prosecutors and her doctors.

She called for a review of the VFA, saying Filipinos were at the losing end of the agreement.

"It was only when I became part of this case that I realized we really should look into the VFA because it leaves us Filipinos at a disadvantage," she said.

She added that Filipino leaders should not always favor "friendship" with the United States at the expense of the Philippines' rights.

Pointedly, Nicole said she could thank only one government prosecutor—Hazel Valdez—and not the three other members of the prosecution panel assembled by the DOJ. (Nicole had been engaged in a public feud with the state prosecutors, whom she accused of trying to arrange a settlement with the men she had charged with rape.)

Nicole also said she now wanted to go on with her life. She said she would like to apply for a job overseas, where she would not be recognized.

"I want to live a normal life again," she said.

Pressure from both camps

Judge Pozon, who joined the Makati RTC in December 2003, also said he had sensed pressure from both the prosecution and the defense.

"Of course there were pressures, although these may be imagined on my part because there was no direct [pressure]. But then we all know that [pressure came from] both sides," he said.

Court staff said Pozon had received letters expressing support for both Nicole and the accused. The letters, sent by nongovernment organizations and sympathizers of the accused from the United States, respectively, were immediately trashed because the judge did not want to be influenced in making his decision, according to court officer in charge Jun Sumbilla.

Pozon closeted himself in his chambers when he deliberated on the case. After the trial closed on Oct. 5, it took him roughly two months to finalize his verdict.

He had to reschedule the promulgation of judgment from Nov. 27 to Dec. 4, citing the case's "voluminous records" and number of witnesses.

Pozon was the second judge to handle the controversial case, which was transferred to the Makati RTC on April 3 on orders of the Supreme Court.

Even before the accused were arraigned, RTC Judge Renato Dilag inhibited himself from handling the case because his son was working with the law firm representing Carpentier.

Rebuffs

Pozon, a University of the East law graduate, twice rebuffed the Department of Justice in major cases brought to his court this year.

When the four US Marines were arraigned in

April, Pozon decided against the DOJ resolution charging only Smith as principal in the case and holding the three others as mere accessories.

He also dismissed the illegal detention charges filed by the DOJ against former National Bureau of Investigation Deputy Director Samuel Ong, actor Rez Cortez and two others for allegedly holding T/Sgt. Vidal Doble against his will inside the San Carlos Seminary in Makati City in June 2005.

Ong, who has yet to come out of hiding, sought sanctuary in the seminary after exposing what he called "the mother of all tapes"—audio recordings that would purportedly prove President Macapagal-Arroyo's involvement in rigging the May 2004 elections.

Doble was a military intelligence agent who allegedly had a hand in wiretapping operations during the 2004 election season.



SLEEPLESS IN MAKATI: Judge Benjamin Pozon makes history for convicting the first American soldier in the history of Philippine-American relations. He says he finally got a good night's sleep after rendering his decision on Monday. EDWIN BACASHAS

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Palace urges budget bicam to restore P8B

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY URGED THE congressional bicameral conference to restore the P8.4 billion slashed by the Senate in the 2007 budget.

Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya said the Senate and the House, which will meet soon to reconcile their versions, should reconsider the alterations they have made and come up with a budget that "still hews closely to the intent and features of the original."

The Senate approved late Monday a P1.126-trillion budget which was P8.4 billion below the amount approved by the House a few months ago.

The senators used their oversight powers over the national budget to get back at those government agencies that they felt had slighted them, slashing the budgets of the Presidential Commission on Good Government (from P79.190 million to P1), the Supreme Court

(from P8.157 billion to P6.705 billion) and the Visiting Forces Agreement Presidential Commission (P2.184 million to P100).

"It will be the agencies concerned that will assess the impact of the fund cuts and realignments proposed by the Senate on their capability to render public service," said Andaya in a statement.

Despite the cuts, Malacañang expressed appreciation at the Senate's approving of the budget before the end of the year.

The government has been forced to operate on a reenacted 2005 budget because of the Senate's stubborn insistence on slashing the Palace's budget proposals.

"We thank the Senate for approving on schedule the proposed national budget for 2007. We note with appreciation that the speedy approval by the House and the Senate of the budget forecloses the possibility of the government again operating on a reenacted budget next year," Andaya said.

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Pagasa to get P200M more

By TJ Burgonio

AFTER GETTING BRICKBATS FOR failing to predict the volume of rainfall, the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration will get an additional budget of P200 million under the Senate version of the 2007 budget which it could use to buy radars.

The P1.126-trillion budget approved by the Senate Monday night includes the new appropriation for Pagasa, which will allow the weather bureau to upgrade its radar systems so it can effectively predict the amount of rainfall during typhoons.

"Right now, Pagasa's equipment can predict the wind speed during a forthcoming typhoon but it does not have the capability to predict the amount of rains that the typhoon would dump in an affected area," Sen. Franklin Drilon, finance committee chair, said.

He said that two Doppler radars, reportedly worth P74 million each, would be purchased and set up in Bicol, the region worst-hit and pummeled by supertyphoon "Reming" last week.

"These radars will certainly help in the disaster preparedness infras-

structure," Drilon said. On top of the P200 million, the Senate also allotted an additional P11 million for the construction of the buildings that would house the radars, he said.

Pagasa and the Philippine Institute of Volcanology (Phivolcs) had come under fire from some officials for allegedly failing to provide sufficient warnings and information to the Bicol region devastated by the supertyphoon with the death toll expected to go over 700.

Pagasa was singled out for its alleged failure to predict the amount of rainfall spawned by the storm that triggered flashfloods and mudflows from the mouth of Mayon Volcano.

The Senate had allotted some P540.716 million for Pagasa in the 2007 budget, the same amount allocated by the House of Representatives. Both chambers are expected to meet in a bicameral conference this week to reconcile their respective versions.

Pagasa had earlier indicated at the Senate budget hearings that it needed to acquire 10 Doppler radars to complete the upgrade of the country's disaster preparedness program by 2010 starting with the purchase of the two radars next year.

Senators in no rush to OK RP-Japan pact

By TJ Burgonio

THE SENATE ISN'T KEEN ON convening the committee of the whole to tackle the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA) this month, further setting back the ratification of the economic deal touted as giving the country unparalleled access to the Japanese market.

The agreement has stirred a furor because of a provision seeking zero tariff on recyclable goods, which environmentalists fear could lead to the entry of hazardous wastes into the country.

President Macapagal-Arroyo, who signed the JPEPA with former Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi last September, submitted the agreement for Senate ratification last Nov. 20.

Sen. Miriam Defensor Santia-

go, the chair of the foreign relations committee, called off her committee's inquiry into the JPEPA that was to start tomorrow, proposing instead that the committee of the whole, that is, the entire Senate, be convened to tackle the ratification.

The trade committee, chaired by Sen. Manuel "Mar" Roxas II, earlier wrapped up its inquiry into the trade impact of the agreement.

However, the rules committee under Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan would rather the committee of the whole be constituted in January to allow the Senate to wrap up deliberations on priority legislation before Congress goes into its holiday break on Dec. 22.

Though he said he has yet to decide on the issue, Senate President Manuel Villar said there was no need to rush to ratify the JPEPA.

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First Day: December 15, Friday

TIME	ACTIVITY	2:25 PM	Forum 3 (Part 1) Negosyong Namumukad-Tangli, Para sa mga Bagong Bayani (Different Businesses for the Overseas Worker)
10:00 AM	Performance by Edu Abraham and Kontra Gapi	3:10 PM	Break
10:30 AM	Ribbon Cutting	3:15 PM	Forum 3 (Part 2) Negosyong Namumukad-Tangli, Para sa mga Bagong Bayani (Different Businesses for the Overseas Worker)
10:40 AM	National Anthem	4:00 PM	Third Raffle and Game/Top Ten Pitfalls of an OFW/Video Greetings
10:42 AM	Invocation	4:05 PM	Forum 4 (Part 1) Iba't-ibang Mapagkakunang ng Perang Pampunahan
10:45 AM	Opening Remarks	4:50 PM	Break
11:00 AM	Forum 1: Ang Kahalagahan ng Pagnegosyo	4:55 PM	Forum 4 (Part 2) Iba't-ibang Mapagkakunang ng Perang Pampunahan
11:45 AM	First Raffle and Game/Tips/Video Greetings	5:40 PM	Fourth Raffle and Game/Top Ten Pitfalls of an OFW/Video Greetings
12:00 NN	Announcements/Lunch Break/Barcelona Movie	5:45 PM	Heart to Heart with OFWs
1:30 PM	Launch	6:30 PM	Game Show
1:35 PM	Opening Spil by Host	7:30 PM	Simbang Gabi
1:45 PM	Forum 2: May K ba akong Magnegosyo? (Entrepreneur Know-Thyself)		
2:20 PM	Second Raffle and Game/Top Ten Pitfalls of an OFW/Video Greetings		

Second Day: December 16, Friday

TIME	ACTIVITY	2:45 PM	Forum 6: Pagpapatalo ng Negosyo, Halang Akoy Nova ibayo (Running a Long-Distance Business)
10:30 AM	Opening: Go Negosyo Day 1 Highlights	3:30 PM	Sixth Raffle and Game / Tips / Video Greetings
11:30 AM	Opening Spil by Host	3:35 PM	Testimony of Sandy Javier of Andok's Manok
11:35 AM	Introduction of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo by Sec. Arturo Brion	3:45 PM	Video Intro about Re-integration
11:55 AM	PGMA Message	3:55 PM	Forum 7: Pagpapatalo sa Sarili, Pamilya at Bayan; Sali sa Pangmatagalang Tagumpay at Makabuluhang Negosyo
12:20 NN	Awarding of 10 Inspiring OFW Entrepreneurs	4:55 PM	Pagpapatalo sa Bayan ng mga OFW
12:50 NN	Announcements / Lunch Break / Film Screening: Barcelona	5:05 PM	Celebrity Guest Appearance
1:55 PM	Opening Spil by Host	5:20 PM	OWWA Concert (OFW Kids Chorus)
1:50 PM	Forum 5: Go Negosyo, Negosyong OFW! (The Inspiring Entrepreneurs Forum)	6:00 PM	Film Screening: Barcelona or Game Show
2:40 PM	Fifth Raffle and Game / Tips / Video Greetings	7:30 PM	Simbang Gabi



Third Day: December 17, Sunday

TIME	ACTIVITY
10:00 AM	Opening: Day 1 and Day 2 Highlights Film Showing
11:00 AM	Game Show: OFW Family Feud with Ogie Alcasid
12:00 NN	Lunch Break SOP/ASAP or Game show
2:30 PM	Celebrity Gift-giving
4:00 PM	5 Flies/The Buzz or Game show
6:30 PM	Closing: Concert

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Velarde vows to stop Con-ass; House changes rule

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From page A1

the Senate.

The new rule now simply reads: "Proposals to amend or revise the Constitution shall be by a resolution which may be filed at any time by any member."

The opposition said the move was illegal since it would deviate from the usual process of having any proposed measure go through both chambers for concurrence or rejection.

The majority lawmakers argued that the second sentence should be deleted because the present Constitution does not specifically provide for separate voting on amending or revising the Charter. The Senate strongly disagrees.

Rep. Constantino Jaraula, chair of the House committee on constitutional amendments, Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Villafuerte and Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman led the majority offensive.

House Minority Leader Francis Escudero said the changing of the rule was illegal, citing past decisions of the House disallowing any amendments without first passing through the committee on rules.

"Tonight's vote is a historic and overwhelming vote for reform," Speaker Jose de Venecia told reporters.

Constitutional crisis

In the interview with the Inquirer, Velarde warned that a Con-ass without the participation of the Senate would create a constitutional crisis.

"I don't think the Senate will take it sitting down," he said in an interview the other day.

Velarde favors a "proper" Con-ass—with the Senate and the House sitting in joint session and voting separately.

Velarde advised the House leaders to leave the task of amending the Constitution to the next Congress to be elected next year.

"They will only waste their time pushing this Cha-cha, which cannot be done. They should direct their precious time to the pressing needs of the country, which is suffering from the calamity (Supertyphoon 'Reming') and let a new Congress in 2007 handle this important issue of Cha-cha," Velarde said.

Do it proper way

Or, he said, the House could pass a resolution calling for the election of members to a constitutional convention, which could then undertake the Charter change.

The political opposition has denounced both the ill-starred people's initiative and the Con-ass campaigns as Palace-backed stratagems to ensure the political survival of President Macapagal-Arroyo, who has been hounded by unresolved questions about the legitimacy of her 2004 election victory.

Velarde denied statements by De Venecia that he (Velarde) was brokering and endorsing the House's Con-ass plan.

"I am not against Cha-cha. I just want it done in the proper way," said Velarde.

Velarde rejected the House plan, which would scrap the May 2007 senatorial and local elections. Under the plan, a different election would be held in November next year to elect the members of parliament.

"There is no way we will agree to postpone the elections," Velarde said, adding the midterm polls would serve as some sort of a referendum for the Arroyo administration and "release her from the political pressures" resulting from doubts about the legitimacy of her presidency.

Velarde said that the House proposal to cancel the May elections rendered the congressmen's motives suspect.

House motive suspect

"They should not push it now because they are suspect already. Why are they afraid of the election?" Velarde said.

Asked if the suspicions of the congressmen's motives were sparked by their plan to install themselves automatically as members of parliament, Velarde said, "Yes."

"As a simple man, I can't understand why in the simple charter of a city, the Senate has to concur (with the House), but in the Charter of the land it won't be included," Velarde said.

He denied claims by De Venecia about his (Velarde's) supposed role in a Con-ass.

De Venecia had said Velarde was brokering talks with the Senate and had proposed the election of 34 regional seats for senators in the planned parliament.

"That was last year, during the time of Sen. (Franklin) Drilon (as Senate President). I tried to broker for a real Con-ass, which includes the Senate and the House on certain conditions," Velarde said.

JDV backtracked?

He said he wanted that the voting in Con-ass be separate and that De Venecia agreed with this. He said he also proposed two types of representation in the parliament—the district and regional representatives.

But he said the talks bogged down because the Speaker backtracked on some of the agreements.

Velarde, who serves as a spiritual adviser of Ms Arroyo, said he recently met with the President and "she was asking me to convince the Senate [to participate in the Con-ass]."

"She's really hoping for that," Velarde said.

House Deputy Minority Leader Rolox Suplico said that neither the Senate nor the country's highest court could stop the House from convening a Con-ass this week.

He said the largely anti-Charter change senators could not run to the Supreme Court to avoid abolition just yet, "much less (could) the Supreme Court issue a temporary restraining order while Con-ass is ongoing."

Political question

Suplico said the amendment of House rules governing proposals for any constitutional amendment, which would pave the way for Con-ass, was an "internal action" by a coequal branch of government.

"The Senate has nothing to do with House rules. The Supreme Court at this point cannot prevent it," said Suplico.

He said the high court could not take it up just yet not only because it involved a "political question"—and thus outside of the province of the Supreme Court—but also because the matter was not yet "justiciable."

Notice from the Senate

Senate President Manuel Villar Jr. said the upper chamber intended to notify the House anew that the lower chamber could not go it alone on Con-ass.

Villar made that clear after Sen. Manuel "Mar" Roxas II asked about the Senate's reaction to the hasty proceedings in the House to convene a Con-ass.

"We are preparing a resolution reiterating our position that this is a bicameral government and the House of Representatives can't unilaterally force a constituent assembly. This resolution is being prepared by the majority leader," Villar said in reply to Roxas's query.

With a report from TJ Burgonio

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, December 6, 2006

1st Week of Advent
Nicholas

1st Reading: Is 25:6-10
Gospel: Matthew 15:29-37

Jesus went to the shore of Lake Galilee, and then went up into the hills where he sat down. Great crowds came to him, bringing the dumb, the blind, the lame, the crippled, and many with other infirmities. The people carried them to the feet of Jesus, and he healed them. All were astonished when they saw the dumb speaking, the lame walking, the crippled healed and the blind able to see; so they glorified the God of Israel.

Jesus called his disciples and said to them, "I am filled with compassion for these people; they have already followed me for three days and now have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away fasting, or they may faint on the way." His disciples said to him, "And where shall we find enough bread in this wilderness to feed such a crowd?" Jesus said to them, "How many loaves do you have?" They answered, "Seven, and a few small fish."

So Jesus ordered the people to sit on the ground. Then he took the seven loaves and the small fish and gave thanks to God. He broke them and gave them to his disciples, who distributed them to the people.

They all ate and were satisfied, and the leftover broken pieces filled seven wicker baskets.

Commentary

The dreams of God always include feasting and communion among all peoples, rejoicing together and forgiveness. This is the marvel of God's salvation—we are rescued from death and evil that destroys. Behold our God! Our God in Jesus' presence among us heals, gives hope, feeds and exhorts his disciples to care for the masses of people as he does—with pity. And with God there is always enough left over to feed the world. Do we see how the dream has become flesh in Jesus and that our way of life is to make that dream always reality in our world?

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BIR: Be wary of 'night-duty' tax collectors

BUSINESSMEN should be wary of Bureau of Internal Revenue personnel who conduct tax compliance inspections on weekends and at night. Most likely, these people are collecting tongs, not taxes.

BIR Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag stressed that the BIR only authorizes tax compliance verification drives (TCVD) or tax mapping operations during daylight hours.

"We have never authorized tax mapping operations and sent BIR personnel to commercial establishments such as those found in commercial areas to do surveillance activities at night

or on weekends," said BIR Regional Director Alfredo Misajon and Revenue District Officer Rosemarie Ragasa.

The tax agency issued the warning in the wake of reports that some unscrupulous people, acting as BIR tax mappers, were visiting business and commercial establishments in Manila, particularly in Binondo and the Tondo-San Nicolas areas.

Buñag noted that such operations usually surface during the Christmas season together with the resurgence of many unregistered businesses.

According to Misajon, legitimate and authorized tax mappers can be easily identified by their BIR identifica-

tion cards and their uniforms. Also, they wear colored shirts with printed words "Tax Mapper" or "Tax Enforcer" and are armed with a mission order.

Business owners can demand the presentation of a mission order before a tax mapping operation is carried out. In line with the Run After Tax Evaders

(RATE) program, the BIR has just charged with tax evasion a Cebu City barangay council member and his wife for P16.035 million tax deficiency—P11.9 million in income tax and P4.1 million in value added tax—including surcharges and interests, for 2003 and 2004.

Charged were Reynaldo Jose, a barangay councilor of Sawang Colero town, and Carolina Jose. BIR investi-

gation showed that Carolina declared only gross revenues of P176,700 for 2003 and 2004, respectively, for her "Sto. Niño Dormitory" while Reynaldo registered with the BIR as a One-Time Taxpayer (ONETT). Cynthia D. Balana

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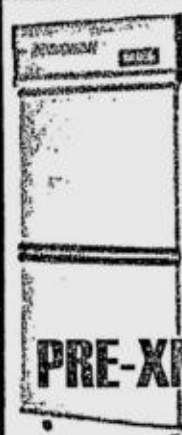
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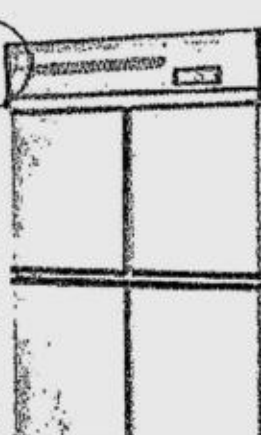
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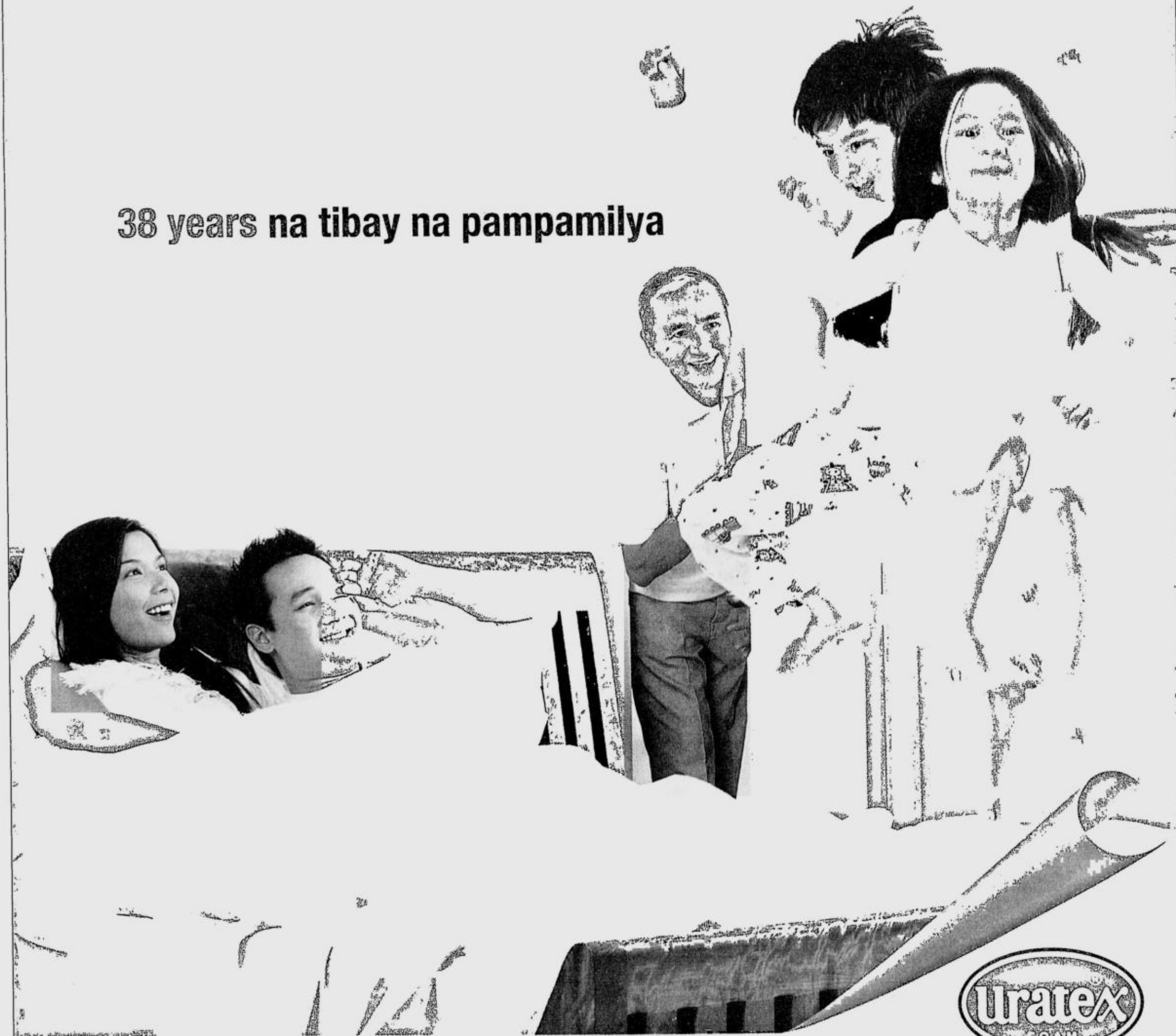
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Cops told to enforce SC order on thrift bank

THE SUPREME COURT YESTERDAY ORDERED national police officials to immediately enforce its order aimed at stopping the intra-corporate dispute at a thrift bank for policemen that officials fear may cause the bank's bankruptcy.

The high court's first division resolution directed Director General Oscar Calderon, the Philippine National Police chief, to stop four former board members of the Air Materiel Wing Savings and Loan Association Inc.

(AMWSLAI) from returning to their posts.

The former AMWSLAI trustees—Col. Luvin S. Manay, Col. Antonio Mantuano, Col. Anselmo R. Geronimo, and Lt. Johnson Nestor Ocfemia—were eased out of the policemen's fund association amid accusations of corruption and mismanagement.

In its Dec. 4 resolution, the division headed by Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban, said it was deputizing the PNP to implement and enforce its temporary re-

straining order.

In the revised TRO, the tribunal directed Manay et al., along with their agents and staff to "cease and desist" from entering the AMWSLAI's offices in Quezon and Pasay cities, and to temporarily stop discharging the functions and duties of board members and to vacate their positions immediately.

To restore order in the management and operation of the policemen's fund, the SC ordered the PNP Chief to ensure that

the new board of trustees headed by retired Col. Ricardo Nolasco is able to perform their duties and functions, and to oversee the day-to-day and unhampered operation of the fund.

In the same resolution, the SC reiterated its decision stopping the implementation of the Court of Appeals' twin rulings dated Aug. 15, 2006 and Nov. 10, 2006 invalidating the Oct. 14, 2005 election of a new AMWSLAI board. **Armand N. Nocum**

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So The Public May Know

On November 28, 2006, operatives of the Philippine National Police-Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (PNP-CIDG) raided the Kayabe Ice Plant and Cold Storage in Pampanga. They uncovered 62,000 kgs of pork meat, identified by the National Meat Inspection Service personnel as the illegally imported cargo from China which was earlier declared missing from the custody of the Bureau of Customs.

The Philippine Association of Meat Processors, Inc. (PAMPI) had already called upon its member-companies earlier not to entertain any offers of this China-sourced pork meat as raw material for processed meats upon receipt of reports of the disappearance of the cargo because **PAMPI does not sanction and regards all forms of smuggling and illegal importation as deplorable.**

PAMPI urges Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap to intervene on the apprehension and investigation of the Kayabe Cold Storage raid to ensure that those involved in compromising the country's livestock biosecurity are identified and punished to the full extent of the law.

PAMPI likewise commends the successful apprehension of the missing cargo by the PNP-CIDG team. Such efforts restore the confidence of the business sector in the sincerity and ability of police authorities to stem illegal activities and business crimes that cheat government of duties and taxes.

The following PHILIPPINE ASSOCIATION OF MEAT PROCESSORS, INC. (PAMPI) members commit themselves to the safety of the consuming public as their highest priority, and call upon their friends in the livestock sector to help prosecute the violators.

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Irrigation suffered heavy damage —NIA

THE NATIONAL Irrigation Administration yesterday said it would immediately draw up plans to address the irrigation needs of the provinces affected by Super Typhoon "Reming," which caused an estimated damage of P330 million to irrigation infrastructure and crops in Albay alone.

NIA Administrator Arturo C. Lomibao, who joined President Macapagal-Arroyo in Legazpi City yesterday, said that in the entire Bicol region, P75 million in infrastructure was damaged in 12 thousand hectares affecting 3,800 farmers. The damage included the erosion of river banks at damsites, washout of canals and partial or complete destruction of irrigation structures and heavy siltation, Lomibao said.

Heavily damaged was the Culiati communal irrigation system in Daraga, Albay, which disappeared when it was buried by mudflow from Mayon volcano. Estimated damage to the system was placed at P15 million affecting 80 hectares of riceland. Likewise, the Omnipos-Maguinon Dam in Guinobatan, Albay servicing 50 hectares of riceland was washed out with an estimated damage of P12 million, he said.

The Libod-Bariri irrigation in Camalig servicing 90 hectares sustained damage worth an estimated P9 million.

Lomibao also said that NIA employees will donate P135,000 to typhoon victims. He said NIA will also forego their Christmas party gifts and instead will donate the funds to the victims.

Int'l experts see need to forecast landslides

By Blanche S. Rivera

INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS HAVE AGREED that there is a pressing need to improve the capability of governments in the Asia-Pacific region to forecast landslides and mudslides in order to save more lives.

"There is an increasing trend in landslides and mudslides, and we're concerned how to better forecast them," Le Huu Ti of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (Unescap) said.

He said there is now a global effort to improve the forecasting capability on mudslides and landslides which have caused more casualties in recent years.

"One of the first things we need to do is to get a good (picture of the) structure of land and continue to monitor the amount of rainfall," James C. Weyman, director of the Honolulu-based Central Pacific Hurricane Center told the Inquirer in a recent interview.

"If (there is) rainfall over a short period of time, the whole bunch coming off at one time, there's greater possibility of landslide," he said.

Weyman, area manager of the center's weather forecasting office, said predicting landslides and mudslides was more difficult because there were so many factors like the type of soil and the amount of rainfall over a period of time.

He said there was a global project called Global Climate Observation which seeks to increase the amount of information experts get from around the world.

Not enough info

"Some (countries) have rain gauges and satellite information but we don't have the amount of coverage we need. There are not enough places we get information from," Weyman said.

He said the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa), the country's weather bureau, had "very good forecasting capability" as the weather bureau also gets data from other meteorological stations in China, Korea, Japan, Australia and the United States, among others.

Meanwhile, Pagasa yesterday said relief and rescue operations in typhoon-ravaged ar-

eas of the country could proceed in the coming days as no tropical cyclone was threatening the country.

No Typhoons

"There are no cyclones in the Philippine area of responsibility but the monsoon will bring rains. The development of a low pressure area is also possible, but it's still far," Pagasa weather branch chief Nathaniel Cruz said.

Weyman said forecasters now can accurately predict the development and direction of typhoons but predicting the intensity has not improved significantly over the past years. Meteorologists still do not fully understand the total structure of a typhoon and its complex variables.

"We need to get the information down to the last kilometer; it's useless if it doesn't get down to people that need to take action quickly," he said.

"With better understanding of typhoons, we hope to reduce damage," he said.

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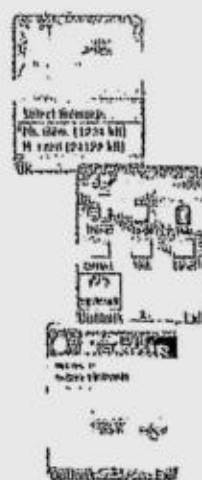
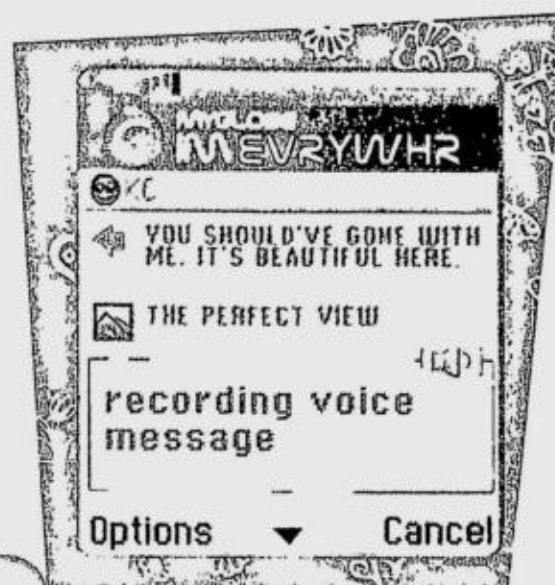


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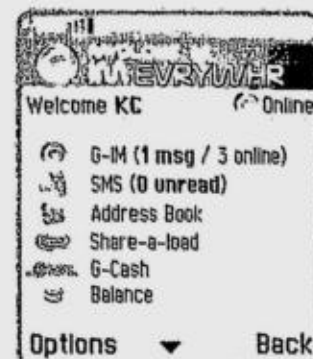
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'Abe' Aguilar Cruz: newspaperman, etc.

THE PASSING OF THE GOLDEN AGE OF INSPIRED and inspiring Filipino editors can never be more pronounced than today when the biography of Emilio Aguilar Cruz is launched at a small, quaint restaurant named "Abe" in Bonifacio Global City.

The launch is doubly significant as a literary or *fin de siècle* event because firstly, the biography is the last completed work of Nick Joaquin; and, secondly, the venue fittingly defines "Abe" (as we in the newspaper fraternity called him) as a man of many parts, including a gourmand and bon vivant, a lover of the good life—the least of his universal attributes. The appearance of Joaquin's last book is an event in itself.

Abe was editor of the Daily Mirror, the afternoon sister paper of The Manila Times, in the 1960s, in which I worked as a foreign affairs reporter and a columnist for 10 years. He was already a legend in the Filipino newspaper world when I crossed his path at a time of profound change in Philippine journalism.

The Mirror was the last great afternoon Filipino daily in English. Abe and Joaquin were contemporaries, friends, and they belonged to that widely gifted circle of literary men who made journalism sing beyond the confines of what Churchill called "literature in a hurry" or some others, the "first draft of history."

Joaquin titled his work "Abe: A Frank Sketch," and told his publishers never to tamper with it. We are fortunate, it was not touched, and in "A Frank Sketch," we have an honest and unembellished portrait of Abe whose talents ranged from not only being an editor, newspaperman, but also being a painter of great originality, a self-taught linguist, an essayist and a culinary connoisseur—a complete human being.

No one could have captured the essence of Abe as a literary man more than Joaquin. Both were newspapermen, but their interests ranged farther afield than mere chronicling events. To call Abe a "renaissance man" or a "man of all seasons" is to beggar words and trivialize them. Of all the biographies of men and women of consequence

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila



written by Joaquin in his prodigious life, "A Frank Sketch" easily stands out as one of his best, despite his waning energy. It is clearly a labor of love. He was in his element when writing the biography of a complex and multi-dimensional man.

Joaquin identifies with his subject, reconstructs the milieu, the life and times that shaped the artistic, literary and journalistic career of Abe. In the book, Joaquin brings back to life the Old Manila he loved so well and knew so intimately.

It was a world whose narrow alleyways, bordering the Times-Mirror-Taliba publications at the heart of Manila's seedy Fleet Street, in Sta. Cruz district, Abe explored with his friends—the milieu in which the big newspaper stories and headlines were made. The book does not hesitate to bring out the foibles of Abe: his lust for life, the dilemmas he struggled with to mediate the competing claims of journalism, literature and the arts on his gifts.

Abe's dilemmas are better told by the book, and I don't wish to cheat the readers the joy of reading this engaging biography of a newspaperman who influenced the lives, outlook and careers of colleagues and associates in the newspaper and literary worlds. No one can tell the story of Abe better than Joaquin. So, it is better to let the book speak for itself.

Abe was far from being the caricature of a tough and fire-eating editor, cursing and driving his reporters to produce a "scoop" to drive up street sales. Contrary to the cliché, Abe was a mild-mannered man, too low-key as an editor, somewhat too timid to exhibit his versatile gifts.

Not just bad luck

AT LARGE



Rina Jimenez-David

typhoons has actually decreased. But, frequency is not really what we should be worried about. We should be looking at impacts."

As Milenyo and Reming have shown, "even a single storm of this magnitude causes sufficient dislocation and damage to erase a decade of investment and development throughout an entire region. One storm, at the wrong place and at the worst time, can cripple a nation."

The number of powerful storms, the "super-typhoons" in the class of Milenyo and Reming, has increased alarmingly over the last two years, Tan observes. "From one to two months per year in the period before the late 1990s, Pagasa data seem to show that, between 2003 and 2006, we had catastrophic typhoons up to six months per year. Barometric pressure readings in the high to mid-800s are no longer uncommon."

AS the documentary "An Inconvenient Truth" bears out, experts the world over are in agreement that the unstable and volatile weather conditions we have been experiencing are due to a single factor: global warming.

"Put simply," explains Tan, "the interaction between hot and cold temperatures dictates weather patterns. As the planet surface warms, therefore, the violence of this interaction increases as well."

Tan cites longitudinal studies proving "an exponential leap" in global temperatures (the graph line of which he describes as resembling a hockey stick). This rising heat on the earth's surface, commonly described as global warming is being caused by so-called "greenhouse gases," of which carbon dioxide is the main culprit. "The burning of fossil fuels, primarily oil and coal, for

He was never intimidating. In fact, he looked more like a benign scholar behind the horseshoe-shaped table we call in the trade as the "news desk." It seemed to me that Abe and the news desk were not made for each other.

Abe was the last person one would expect to produce a daily newspaper striving for Pulitzer prizes. He never betrayed any hint of posturing as a crusading editor bent on toppling governments, or aspiring to be buried in the Libingan ng mga Bayani. All he was interested in as an editor and newspaperman was to produce a lively, readable afternoon newspaper, reflecting life in the raw in a big city pulsating with humanity, its sins and nobility.

In the 1960s, the afternoon paper had begun to be an endangered species. Afternoon papers in many of the big cities of the world were beginning to fold to make way for the two-newspaper big city. Few afternoon newspapers have survived the onslaught of TV news and falling advertising, with Le Monde in Paris holding the fort as one of the last strongholds of afternoon newspaper journalism.

The passing of Abe in 1991 also marked the end of an era of great editors and newspapermen overcrowded at the top with the luminous presence of the likes of Jose Luna Castro, Vicente Albano Pacis, Jose Lansang, S.P. Lopez, Jose P. Bautista and I.R. Solingo, to mention a few. A generation gap opened after them.

Abe was unique among that vanishing breed of the age of giants of Philippine journalism. He was not only a newspaper editor chronicling the flow of life of the big city and of the nation. He also lived a full life, enjoying its pleasures and suffering its pains, sharing them with those of the subject of his prolific pen. No editor knew the people who read the Mirror each day more than Abe. He incarnated their faults and their aspirations, quietly and without pomp and pretensions.

He observed life as it was. The Daily Mirror reflected Abe and the reality of Philippine journalism—the people who wrote the news, their faults and virtues.

energy or transport are the main sources of carbon dioxide... This is creating the new weather patterns that plague our world."

And this is the challenge that now confronts countries like the Philippines and regions like Bicol.

While relief and rehabilitation efforts are important and should be pursued, they will not bring an end to an escalating cycle of death and destruction. Tan says "a proactive and strategic solution" must be pursued, specifically one that addresses the problem of global warming.

"It is becoming evident that the effects of global warming are a breeding ground for new instabilities and inequities," Tan notes. "After all, some areas will be hit more severely than others. The 35 million Filipinos who depend on seafood as a primary source of protein will feel this more than others. Uncertainty and inequitable access to resources are oftentimes the root of new conflict. Without stability, there can be no substantial development. Without a manageable level of predictability, there will be less and less new investment. Global warming is not merely an environmental or health concern, it is also the most serious political, economic and social threat that faces our country and the entire planet."

TAN would want energy efficiency to be the rallying cry for all sectors. "An enabling environment for renewable energy should be established and its use mainstreamed. The Renewable Energy Bill must be passed. Technological solutions that contribute to clean and efficient energy should be identified, promoted, widely distributed and encouraged." As well, greenhouse gases-producing technologies must be held accountable "for the true cost of mitigation," while mass transit should be promoted and private transport options made more expensive.

"If we hope to provide a good life for our children, basic adjustments have to be made now," says Tan.

He offers a last word of hope: "We started it. We can stop it. We must."

Stripped and defiled

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo



banked with earth. Just past this, a few hundred yards, we saw a solitary figure lying on the road. The body was almost stripped of clothing, and there were no marks of rank on the blood-soaked coat. But the face of the dead man had a look I have never noticed on the face of other dead men in insurgent uniform on the field of battle, in the wake of an American firing line. The features were clear cut and the forehead high and shapely. I decided the man must have been an insurgent officer. A soldier came running down the trail.

"That's old Pilar" he said, "we got the old rascal. I guess he's sorry he ever went up against the Thirty-third."

"There ain't no doubt about its being Pilar," rattled on the young soldier. "We got his diary and letters and all his papers, and Sullivan of our company's got his pants, and Snider's got his shoes, but he can't wear them because they're too small, and a sergeant in G company got one of his silver spurs, and a lieutenant got the other, and somebody swiped the cuff buttons, and all I got was a stud button and his collar with blood on it."

"So this was the end of Gregorio del Pilar. Only 22 years old, he managed to make himself a leader of men when he was hardly more than a boy, and at last had laid down his life for his convictions. Major Marsh had the diary. In it, he had written under the date of December 2, the day he was killed:

"The General has given me the pick of all the men that can be spared and ordered me to defend the pass. I realize what a terrible task is given me. And yet I feel that this is the most glorious mo-

ment of my life. What I do is done for my beloved country. No sacrifice can be too great."

"A private sitting by the fire was exhibiting a handkerchief. It's old Pilar's. It's got 'Dolores Hoses' on the corner. I guess that was his girl. Well it's all over with Gregorio."

"Anyhow," said Private Sullivan, "I got his pants. He won't need them anymore."

"The man who had the general's shoes strode proudly past, refusing with scorn a Mexican dollar and a pair of shoes taken from one of the private insurgent soldiers. A private sitting on a rock was examining a golden locket containing a curl of a woman's hair. 'Got the locket off his neck,' said the soldier."

"As the main column started on its march for the summit of the mountain, a turn in the trail brought us again in the sight of the insurgent general far down below us. There had been no time to bury him. Not even a blanket or poncho had been thrown over him."

"A crow sat on the dead man's feet. Another perched on his head. The fog settled down upon us. We could see the body no longer."

"We carved no line and we raised not a stone, and we left him alone in his glory."

"And when Private Sullivan went by in his trousers, and Snider in his shoes, and the other man who had the cuff buttons, and the sergeant who had the spur, and the lieutenant who had the other spur, and the man that had the handkerchief, and the other man that had his shoulder straps, it suddenly occurred to me that his glory was about all we had left him."

Like the Balangiga bells, Del Pilar's personal effects are considered war booty. I only wish that his diary will turn up in some US attic one day and be returned home so that we will know more about the "Boy General." Only then will our history gain a voice different from that of the enemy.

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Porn and spectacle

THE DAY THE NICOLE VERDICT WAS TO BE HANDED down, I happened to be at the Department of Health on Rizal Avenue in Manila with a fellow UP faculty member and some students. After the meeting, I suggested a visit to Quiapo. I've been working on a research report on Filipino sexuality and wanted to look at the type of videos being sold in that area.

It wasn't difficult convincing my companions to come along. For Diliman creatures, a trip to Manila is like a safari, and a trip to Quiapo is, well, extreme safari, almost like inviting people to walk with lions and tigers.

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan



Inferno

Or maybe a better metaphor comes from the Italian writer Dante's Inferno. In Quiapo, there's a particular building that could have come straight out of Dante's magnum opus.

The street itself is filthy with stagnant water and every imaginable kind of litter, but this is nothing compared to the interior. The stalls facing the sidewalk all sell pirated videos, but fairly wholesome stuff like Baby Einstein and Disney cartoons. Enter the building and you know it's going to be different inside. Oppressive heat engulfs you. The miasmas of the street's trash assault you, now mixed with human sweat. The videos being sold become raunchier, lots of violent action films but still mixed with Korean telenovelas and local tear-jerkers, and some soft porn. This isn't quite Inferno yet, maybe Purgatorio, with videos of the most inferior quality, many copies of copies of pirated copies.

It's a labyrinth in there and as you get into the deepest recesses, even the vendors' faces begin to change. There are gaunt-looking women carrying emaciated children. I learned later that some of them actually live in here.

Move further in and you don't see the women anymore. The vendors are all men now, and the stuff they sell is hard porn.

It's an international X-rated bazaar in that Inferno. Name it, they have it. The vendors ask what you want: Pinoy? Kano? Japanese? They tout videos with women on the cover, literally in your face, and can quickly tell if you're interested or not. If you're not, they ask, "M 2 M?" which means male to male. And if you're not still not interested, they have more varieties to offer, from ladyboys (male transsexuals who've had hormone therapy but not the surgery itself) to "barely legal" videos, referring to very young "stars."

The Filipino productions seem a bit tamer, but try to make up for this with every other title carrying the word "exposé" or "scandal," usually named after a place. In fact, I think this whole genre started out with something like "Dumaguete Scandal," supposedly secret videos taken in dormitories of students, and they certainly weren't working on their home-work.

Cities were soon joined by provinces, and, curiously, by schools, with titles like "UST Scandal" and "Perpetual Help Scandal," although that had seems to be fading, too. When I asked last Monday, the vendors said those titles had been "phased out." But one of them, desperate to make a sale, went through his whole stock and dug out two videos: "Ate, neo de Zamboanga Scandal," supposedly taken with a Nokia phone and, to the feigned dismay of our team, "UP Scandal," Voyeurism

Porn thrives because of the voyeur in humans. Some of these scandal-and-exposé tapes are extremely blurred, but this, I guess, is part of the thrill that's pushed through the title, a chance to peek in, via digital technology, at the most intimate of human behavior.

And who are we supposed to be peeking at? The students are popular, partly because young people having sex is so terribly transgressive. The X-rated videos, supposedly of dorms, is there to poke fun at society. The wrapper of one X-rated tape, "Bacolod Sex Scandal," has this come-on: "The people and leaders of Bacolod have neglected the proliferation of sex videos of the city's young. The young now are overwhelmed with lust, ready to do it anywhere any time. Wake up! Witness these..." (I'll omit the colorful adjectives) shots taken in Bacolod.

In a country so plagued by political scandals, it's inevitable that the videos begin to take on some of those national themes. The vendors told me one best-seller these days is "Davao City Police Scandal," supposedly footage of trysting between a police officer and the wife of a junior military man. "As seen and reported in TV Patrol and 24 Oras," the cover declares.

Then it happened. "Nicole! Nicole!" one vendor offered, waving a video. I found out they were selling two videos, one called "Olongapo Scandal" and the other "Nicole." The videos feature a Filipina and a Caucasian. The videos play on the Nicole tragedy, even as it maligns her, insinuating that she had a sordid past, culminating with the rape.

Still porn

The Nicole case, and its strange convergence with the X-rated videos, reminds us of the many battles that still need to be fought around gender and sexuality issues.

First, throughout the trial, there was a lot of gossip, pretty much similar to the "Olongapo Scandal" tapes, of a "liberalized" (used in its negative Filipino-English sense) woman who was asking for it because she had gone out with the Americans and had been drinking. I even heard talk about how "sweet" Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith looked, which unnerves me because it shows how naïve we can be at times. My psychologist friends will tell you about the paradox of the sociable sociopath: the most devious, the most lecherous of sociopaths are able to get away with bloody murder precisely because they can be warm and amiable.

Lost in the portrayal of Nicole and the corporal is this simple definition of rape: forced sex. It's important that we Filipinos, the men especially, learn that there is such a thing as date rape, and even marital rape. In fact, there's something even more bestial with date and marital rape because in such cases, you violate someone who has come to trust you.

Second, the coverage of the rape incident often took on qualities of those cheap Quiapo porn videos. In fairness, many media practitioners were conscious about the ethics of reporting on rape, for example using the pseudonym "Nicole" even if it was not legally required, but much of the coverage was clearly intended to titillate, as the legal definition of porn goes.

Now that the trial is over, Nicole will fade from public memory. If she is remembered, it will be as "the one raped." There's the risk we might end up forgetting all the other important issues, from national sovereignty and the Visiting Forces Agreement, to our still twisted concepts about sex and sexuality.

To remain fixated on the sensational aspects of the rape is to reduce this whole incident into another seedy porn production, like what's sold in Quiapo, turning us into a nation of voyeurs craving for cheap public spectacles.

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Formula makers' suit deplored

WE, AT THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE Rights of Children in Southeast Asia (ARCSEA), are appalled by the recent moves of milk companies and foreign businesses to "kill" the safety measures adopted by government health agencies through the efforts of breastfeeding advocates. The current TRO (temporary restraining order) issued by the Supreme Court upon the petition of milk companies, denies Filipino consumers, specifically mothers, their right to information and their right to be forewarned of the risks of formula-feeding.

Milk companies have also threatened to file a case against the Philippine government at the World Trade Organization (WTO). This was the case in Guatemala, where an infant food giant succeeded in circumventing a law on breastfeeding af-

ter big business threatened to withdraw from that country preferential treatments in trade deals.

The milk companies enjoyed a 400-percent increase in sales, more than 10 years after the Philippines joined the WTO in 1995. The World Health Organization estimates that Filipinos spend P43 billion a year on infant formulas. This best exemplifies how profit-driven milk companies are at the expense of the general health and survival of infants.

Studies have shown that *Enterobacter sakazakii* and salmonella that may be found in infant formulas put infants in mortal risk. According to WHO, it is estimated that every year, 16,000 child deaths in the country can be traced to formula-feeding. This proves how inferior and potentially haz-

ardous formula-feeding is.

No milk substitutes can compare with breast milk. If President Macapagal-Arroyo really cares for children as she would like to project herself, she should support efforts to ensure that safety measures are in place as stated in the Milk Code.

The government must not cater to the belly-aching, bullying and tantrums of these big companies. The government should not baby them. The survival of the new generation of Filipinos must not be placed in the hands of these milk companies.

—SOPHIA FLOR B. GARDUCE,
executive director, Association for the Rights of Children in Southeast Asia (ARCSEA), arcsea@childrightssea.org

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LETTERS

Norvasc users' intervention sought

OXFAM WOULD LIKE TO CONGRATULATE the Inquirer for its very accurate editorial on Pfizer's betrayal of the people's right to affordable medicines. (PDI, 11/19/06)

We agree that Pfizer's lawsuit is intended to "blackmail" the government and delay the "early working" procedure or the introduction of a cheaper, generic version of Norvasc when its patent expires next year. If Pfizer wins the suit, it could effectively extend its monopoly over the product by another 18 months after its patent expires in June 2007. (It takes 18 months for the Bureau of Food and Drugs [BFAD] to evaluate an application for drug registration.)

The patients will, therefore, have to bear the burden of another 18 months of high-priced Norvasc while Pfizer enjoys another 18 months of patent control and assured sales. This will translate into at least P2.39 billion more in additional sales for Pfizer, based on its sales growth. (Norvasc's sales in the Philippines in 2005 hit P1.185 billion

and have been growing annually at 34.5 percent.)

If Pfizer succeeds, it can use the same strategy to prevent generic competition from immediately entering the market, even after the patent expiration of Pfizer's Lipitor, Zithromax and Unasyn brands. These have annual sales of P568.5 million, P378 million and P428.8 million, respectively.

Oxfam is calling on the Norvasc users to come forward and exercise their patients' rights over the pharmaceutical companies' patent rights. The patients as consumers can act and be counted as one of the intervenors in the case filed by Pfizer.

A win for Pfizer in the case would allow other multinational pharmaceutical companies to continue depriving poor people of access to affordable medicines, thus compromising their health.

—SHALIMAR VITAN,
Oxfam campaigns coordinator
in the Philippines, 95 Malumanay St.,
Teachers' Village, Quezon City

FOSS: not confusing, its benefits are clear

IN HIS NOV. 21 COLUMN, CONRADO BANAL said I did not really author the bill "Free/Open Source Act of 2006" now pending in Congress. And quoting the Business Software Alliance (BSA), he also derided the bill as a "prime model of confusion."

Let me assure him that I authored the bill. My office worked on it for four months. It started with a suggestion from FOSS (free/open source software) advocates in the Computer Professionals Union (CPU). Modeled after the Brazil and Peru FOSS policies, it is the result of inputs from various geeks, techies and FOSS practitioners—from my two staff who happen to be competent IT professionals, IT lawyers in the UP College of Law, members of the Philippine Linux Users Group (PLUG), GNU/Linux guru and prime advocate Richard Stallman of the MIT-based Free Software Foundation, who personally e-mailed his very valuable comments. It also contains inputs from the government's Commission on Information and Communications Technology and the International Open Source Network of the UNDP.

FOSS computer applications may be acquired, copied, modified or redistributed by their users as they see fit. They are the generic drugs of the software industry, providing consumers with an alternative to the expensive, overbearing and restrictive products of proprietary software monopolies.

With FOSS, if a consumer needs an office suite that has applications for word processing, presentations, spreadsheet, graphics/drawing and database, he can either get Microsoft Office for P19,000 or simply download Open Office on the Internet for free. Also, he has the chance to modify the program plus the permission to redistribute it to every Juan, Pedro or Maria without the BSA breathing down his neck.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) says FOSS has the following strategic benefits—(1) developing local capacity/industry; (2) reducing imports/conserving foreign exchange; (3) enhancing national security; (4) reducing copyright infringements; (5) enabling localization; (6) increasing competition; (7) reducing total cost of ownership; and (8) achieving vendor independence—for which reasons the French parliament and entire French police force have junked Microsoft and are now migrating to FOSS, just like so many other governments in the world.

What my bill wants is for the government to use and encourage the development of FOSS as well as apply open standards in its IT requirements. It also encourages the education sector to develop IT professionals knowledgeable in this new trend in the software industry. What's so confusing about that, only Banal and his clients in the BSA can tell.

We understand the resistance of proprietary software monopolies to this bill but it's a free market out there and government has every right to choose the products it wants. The pharmaceutical monopolies hated the Generics Bill like hell, but Congress passed it nevertheless because it was good for everyone.

—REP. TEDDY CASIÑO
party list, Bayan Muna

Law may backfire on GMA, AFP and PNP

THE ENACTMENT OF AN ANTI-TERRORISM LAW is not advisable under the present Philippine political setting. To do so would classify Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's use of the police and military establishments as terrorism.

While there is no known universal definition of terrorism, the acceptable ones are already embodied in such crimes as rebellion, insurrection, coup d'etat and insurgency. These will make an anti-terrorism law superfluous and unnecessary. Meaning, the elements of such crimes also define terrorism as involving an armed organization (military and/or police) that uses violence (bashing the heads of people in peaceable assemblies) or that threatens the use of violence to intimidate, coerce and create fear among a population to achieve or serve a political objective (ensure the survival of the present administration). With this definition of terrorism, GMA, as commander in chief of the police and military, becomes the head of a terror organization.

In our present political setting, our legislators should think this over. They should restrain themselves from passing legislations, such as an anti-terrorism law, just to copy what governments in the West are doing.

—MAJ. GEN. FORTUNATO ABAT (ret.),
fortunatouabat@yahoo.com



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'Reming' halts Albay mining operation

AUSTRALIA'S LAFAYETTE MINING LTD. SAID yesterday it does not expect operations at its Rapu-Rapu mine in Albay province to start for at least six weeks due to damage from a powerful typhoon.

The company's shares fell 13 percent to A\$0.085 after it said there had been some damage to base metal plant facilities and to a loading dock, and more substantial damage to other facilities, including offices.

"It is still too early to provide a definitive estimate of the likely cost of restoring the site to operating condition. It is expected that resumption of base metals production will not occur for a period of at least six

weeks," Lafayette said in a statement.

Supertyphoon Reming hit the Philippine coast on Thursday.

It was the second typhoon this year to hit Rapu-Rapu, located on a remote island 350 km southeast of Manila and the latest in a series of troubles.

The mine is running on a temporary clearance order after being shut down last year following two cyanide spills.

The company hopes the government will allow it to permanently re-open after Lafayette reviewed all its environmental procedures.

Lafayette said it estimates the first shipment of concentrate will be ready within a month of a restart of operations. It added that the damage may also, depending on its extent, affect initiatives it had taken to increase short-term working capital.

Lafayette has estimated the

lode can generate revenues of \$350 million a year from annual production of 10,000 tons of copper in concentrates, 14,000 tons of zinc, 50,000 tons of gold and 600,000 ounces of silver.

Aside from damaging some facilities at the mining site, Reming also wreaked havoc in several villages in Legazpi City, the Albay capital, toppling electric posts and unleashing mudslides and boulders into villages where at least 1,000 are be-

lieved dead.

Some officials have given up hope of finding more survivors under tons of rubble that fell on the villages.

Hundreds of passengers were stranded in Bicol ports at the height of Reming.

Bus trips were also suspended as roads were blocked by debris.

Officials said it would take years for Albay to fully recover from the devastation wrought by Reming. *Reuters*

'Your job is done, good soldier'

DAGUPAN CITY—"YOU CAN REST now. Your job is done, good soldier."

With these words from American Army Brig. Gen. Simeon Trombitas, Filipino-American Staff Sergeant Richwell Doria was buried here on Tuesday in full military honors.

"Thank you for your courage, thank you for your sacrifice, thank you from the people of two great nations, the United States of America and the Philippines," said Trombitas, commander of the United States Army special operations command in Korea, in his remarks during funeral mass at the St. John the Evangelist Cathedral here.

Doria, who would have turned 26 today (Dec. 6), was killed on Nov. 7 in Kirkuk, Iraq, after being struck by small arms fire during an air assault mission. His flag-draped coffin arrived at his parents' house in Barangay Pantan here on Monday.

"[He] made the ultimate sacrifice, giving his life courageously in protecting his men. He saved the life of his squad through his courage and selfless action and he brought his soldiers back home," Trombitas said.

Doria, who was the infantry squad leader of nine soldiers, was the only casualty during the operation.

US Ambassador Kristie Kenney failed to attend Doria's funeral.

In his homily, Fr. Jim Cerezo remembered Doria for his military-style haircut and for his "quiet in-



A BOY sits as an honor guard watches over the rifles to be used for the 21-gun salute for the late Staff Sgt. Richwell Doria.

RAY ZAMBRANO/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

tegrity."

Cerezo said they were schoolmates at the East Central Elementary School here, where Doria's mother, Rosario, is a teacher.

He said war is a tragedy but

Doria's death was not pointless because he died serving in a war "that hopefully will bring peace."

"It is always more tragic when good men just do nothing in spite of the evil around them. He

died for the ideals he believed in. He died for his friends. He died as a hero," Cerezo said.

"Richwell Doria, welcome home. We are proud of you," said Cerezo. *Gabriel Cardinoza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

ROUNDUP

Slay suspect charged

SAN FRANCISCO, Agusan del Sur—Police here said they have already identified the two suspects in the killing of a German national in Barangay Hubang on Nov. 24. Chief Insp. Floriano Ravelo Jr., San Francisco police chief, said charges have also been filed against the suspects, who he declined to identify. Ravelo said the suspects were still at large and identifying them could jeopardize efforts to arrest them. The German national, Karsten Haessler, 43, of Wolfsburg, Germany, died from a lone bullet wound in the forehead when he engaged the suspects, who were fleeing after robbing him and his family, in a gunfight. Police launched a manhunt after the attack but failed to catch up with the suspects. *Chris Panganiban, Inquirer Mindanao*

P2M lost in Negros fire

BACOLOD CITY—About P2.1 million in dry goods and pieces of property went up in smoke as fire hit the public market of La Castellana town, 67 km south of here, early Saturday, police said. The fire razed 13 market stalls, including three government-owned stores, and the eastern portion of the town public market roof, Senior Insp. Placido Composa said in his report to the Negros Occidental Police Provincial Office. Police said the fire could have been caused by faulty electrical wiring. The fire started at the eastern portion of the public market about 1 a.m. Saturday. La Castellana Mayor Enrico Elumba said the new public market of La Castellana, constructed in 1996, had already been hit twice by fire. *Carla Gomez, Inquirer Visayas*

8 alleged gang members held

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—Eight suspected members of a big time criminal syndicate, including a woman, involved in oil pilferage were arrested while they were illegally unloading oil products from a truck beside a road near this camp on Saturday. Calabarzon police director Chief Supt. Nicasio Radovan Jr. said the suspects belonged to a crime group preying on oil depots in Batangas. He identified those arrested as Zalde Pilarte, 49; Rodolfo Manuel, 60; Manuel Veneracion, 57; Arturo Torres, 44; Tirso Crivollo, 34; Hilario Manarang, 43; Geno Nopra, 30; and Vanessa Simosa, 37. Supt. James Brillantes, chief of the police Regional Special Operations Group (RSOG), said the suspects were caught while transferring oil from a delivery tanker owned by Pilipinas Shell to an eight-wheel truck in Barangay Canlubang at around 1:20 p.m. He said four of the suspects were on board a maroon Mitsubishi Adventure and a jeep and served as "escorts" of the trucks. He said police also found the identification cards of two police officers at the windshield of the two vehicles. *Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Marinduque calls for help

LUCENA CITY—An Internet website has been created to solicit help for the province of Marinduque that is reeling from the destruction wrought by Supertyphoon Reming. The website, <http://helpmarinduque.phpnet.us>, featured photos of destruction in the island province left by Reming. "Electricity will not be restored for weeks or even months. Life will not be the same again in Marinduque. We need your donations of cash, medicines and vitamins, and tents, and other relief goods in order to help as many people as possible," said part of the message posted in the website. Donation in kind may be dropped at the residence of Marinduque Gov. Carmencita Reyes at 1259 Acacia Road, Dasmariñas Village, Makati City or through Singles for Christ South B at 4 Citation Loop Street Alabang 400 Village, Muntinlupa. Cash donations can be deposited to PNB Boac Savings Account of Karen Reside (chief of staff of Rep. Edmund Reyes). On Thursday, the province bore the brunt of a direct hit from Reming, which destroyed or damaged up to 90 percent of all houses in the province. The Department of Social Welfare and Development reported that more than 40,000 families were affected in the municipalities of Boac, Buenavista, Gasan, Mogpog, Sta. Cruz, and Torrijos. *Delfin Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Rice smuggling probe

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Navy Vice Admiral Rufino Lopez has ordered an investigation of a junior officer who was allegedly involved in smuggling here. Lopez said the Navy lieutenant has tried to sneak in more than 100 sacks of imported jasmine rice from China recently. "I have instructed Commodore (Geronimo) Defensor to conduct a deeper probe on this," Lopez said. Defensor is commander of the Naval Forces in Western Mindanao. Based on records from the police office here, the jasmine rice was brought here from Jolo by a Navy vessel. It was unloaded on Nov. 20 and was transferred to a truck owned by a businessman. The truck was impounded by policemen as it was leaving the Navy Compound. Police said the truck driver has presented some documents including a pass signed by Lt. Junjie Tabuanda. The pass allowed the truck to get out of the compound according to the report. It was later learned that Tabuanda commands the BRP Benguet 507. Tabuanda later appeared over a TV station here and said the rice was for his men's consumption. "Our ship encountered trouble, we have to sell the rice so it will not rot," he said. He denied he was involved in smuggling. *Julie Alpala, Inquirer Mindanao*



OUTSTANDING STUDENTS

Vice President Noli de Castro witnesses the turnover of the check donated by the Rotary Club Midtown Quezon City for a prize for the Vice President Noli de Castro Outstanding Student Awards during its launching in Baguio City. Also in photo (from left) are Baguio City Vice Mayor Leandro Yangot Jr., education regional director Benito S. Tumamao, lawyer Jesse Andres, Education Secretary Jeslie Lopus and architect Liza Padua, president of Rotary Club Midtown QC District 3780.

City mayors to send money to 'Reming' victims

By David Israel Sinay
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—A GROUP OF THE country's city mayors agreed to send financial aid to areas devastated by Supertyphoon Reming in the Bicol region.

Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Treñas, head of the League of Cities of the Philippines (LCP), said the league would set aside financial aid to the areas hit by the typhoon after it gets all pieces of information on the damages.

Treñas arrived Sunday from Bangkok where he represented

the country for the second policy forum on urban environmental management in Southeast Asia.

He said the LCP is now assessing all areas in the Bicol region to determine the financial assistance that will be extended to the local government units.

According to Treñas, Iriga City Mayor Madelaine Gazmen and Legazpi City Mayor Noel Rosal had informed him about the devastation left by the typhoon in their respective areas.

The LCP usually provides P50,000 in donation to areas af-

fected by a calamity, he said.

Other donors who gave money for victims of the mudslides were businessman Zaldy Co, owner of the Misibis Resort in Albay who gave P500,000 for survivors of the mudslides in Padang Village and the Ople Foundation that gave relief goods to the villagers.

LCP liaison officer Francis Cruz said the league gave financial assistance to the landslide victims of Barangay Guinsaugon, Saint Bernard, Southern Leyte, through the office of Gov. Rosette Leria.

The LCP also released P50,000 to

Guimaras after the Aug. 11 Petron oil spill. The Iloilo City government also donated 250 sacks of rice.

However, Treñas said he would recommend a bigger amount due to the extent of the damage in the Bicol region.

He said the Iloilo City government could use part of its calamity funds to help. The city government has P34.39 million in its calamity fund.

Treñas also said that the LCP would not hold its general assembly and year-end meeting to save funds and donate these instead to the victims of the calamity.

Lawyers' group asks PNP to solve judge's slay

COTABATO CITY—THE INTEGRATED Bar of the Philippines (IBP) chapter here has challenged police and military authorities to work for the early resolution of the assassination of Judge Sahara Silongan.

Silongan, judge of the regional trial court branch 15 here, was driving his family when ambushed by two motorcycle-riding gunmen on Saturday.

His wife Bai Lala was injured while two other family members were unscathed.

The suspects, Samsudin Abas and Hasim Maon Ando, were later arrested according to Chief Supt. German Doria, Central Mindanao police chief.

In a resolution, the IBP-Cotabato chapter also condemned the ambush-slaying of Silongan. They expressed fear it could go unresolved like other cases of killings in the city, including the October ambush-slaying of lawyer Arnel Datukon, social fund manager of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

"He is young and a good man. His death deserves justice," Judge Bansuan Ibrahim of RTC Branch 13 said of Silongan.

Silongan was known for his straight-forward and uncompromising decisions to provide justice, according to IBP Cotabato past President Samuel Fontanilla.

"It would be unfair if justice is

denied to a just man like him," Fontanilla said.

Doria said the IBP could help the police build an air-tight case against Abas and Ando.

He said as in the Datukon case, the assassination of Silongan was also carried out by guns for hire.

"Several angles are being looked into as probable motives but we are putting more weight on personal grudge as the possible angle," he said.

In Maitum, Sarangani, residents launched late last week a signature campaign asking President Macapagal-Arroyo to intervene for a speedy resolution of the murder of Mayor George Yabes.

In the petition, the residents of

Maitum also asked Ms Arroyo to direct the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) to speed up the prosecution of those responsible for Yabes' death.

Yabes was well-loved by his constituents for his dedication to service.

Under his leadership, Maitum reaped numerous rewards in good governance, environment protection, and maternal and child care.

"We the people, children and friends of Maitum join the Yabes family in seeking speedy justice for our beloved Mayor George Yabes," the petition said. *Charlie Señase and Aquiles Zonio, Inquirer Mindanao*

DENR, gov't execs squatting on watershed

BAGUIO CITY—THE GOVERNMENT has been compelled to demolish houses located inside the city's primary watershed, after receiving reports that Department of Environment and Natural Resources officials allegedly own many of these structures, acting Mayor Reinaldo Bautista said on Monday.

He said the DENR officials were named in a list drawn up by the Busol Watershed Task Force, an inter-municipal undertaking between Baguio and neighboring La Trinidad town in Benguet, which the watershed serves.

Government forester Algen Lino represents DENR in the task force. The Baguio Water District, which has the franchise to distribute water in the city, is also represented in the task force.

Among the officials identified in the task force list are a retired DENR regional director, a government accountant and officials involved in forest protection.

Last week, Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes placed on preventive suspension several DENR officials in Baguio for allegedly conspiring to sell a public road.

But the list implicating more DENR officials has not been verified, said Councilor Erdolfo Balajadia, chair of the advocacy group Baguio Regreening Movement (BRM).

"We have always been hearing stories that DENR officials are behind the squatting [inside Busol], so I always advised the city government to immediately demolish

these structures," he said.

Balajadia, a former city prosecutor, said squatting "is a continuing crime," so nothing prevents the city government from doing its duty.

Augusto Lagon, officer-in-charge of the DENR Cordillera office, said the agency has formed a team to determine the veracity of the Busol list.

Lagon, regional technical director of the DENR Forest Management Service, said he supervised a DENR delineation project to determine Busol's boundaries until it was recently discontinued.

He said mapping out the watershed's boundaries is a project initiated by his predecessors.

By measuring the extent of the watershed, DENR will offer local officials data that will be necessary for them to determine how they plan to rehabilitate Busol, he said.

He said environmentalists and forest experts originally proposed to exclude inhabited areas of the watershed so government could concentrate on replenishing the remaining forest lands.

But this option became complex when a law granting ancestral land rights was enacted, he said.

He said some government officials may have assumed that lands excluded from Busol by virtue of the surveys would end up available for sale.

This may explain why there was resistance to the DENR mapping project, he said. **Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon**



CALENDAR ART

Thirteen works of art of Bacolod City-based painter Jovito Andres will appear in a 2007 calendar to be launched on Dec. 16, 6 p.m. at the Artes Figuras Art Gallery at 296 Don Gil Garcia St., Cebu City. The artworks, entitled "Pambatang Larong Pinoy," are done in pastel.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

BAGUIO YULETIDE PREPARATIONS

Warm weather threatening to thaw 'snow show'

BAGUIO CITY—WARM YULETIDE weather is threatening to thaw the "snow show" that act-

ing Mayor Reinaldo Bautista Jr. is producing for the city's tourists.

Bautista and some volunteers from the business community here plan to shower downtown Baguio with snow manufactured by machines from atop city rooftops.

According to Bautista's plan, the "snow show" will occur every evening once the tourist season picks up. The summer capital receives the most tourists during the Christmas holidays.

But for the crisp snow crystals to linger in the air, the downtown temperature must be at least 10 degrees Celsius, Bautista was told.

"The snow should at least last more than five seconds," he said here during the opening week's flag ceremony at City Hall on Monday.

The city temperature since last month has ranged from a low of 13 degrees Celsius at dawn to a high of 23 degrees Celsius at noon.

Weather has been unpredictable since the El Niño phenomenon set in this year, said Joseph Rios, chief meteorologist of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Service Administration (Pagasa) weather station.

"We experience extreme climatic variables. So malamig sa madaling araw tapos maaliwalas sa tanghali tapos lalamig ulit sa gabi (It is cold at dawn, then it warms up at noon, and then it cools down again at night). It is hard to come up with accurate forecasts under these circumstances," he said.

Weather forecasts also predict a last storm hitting the city before the year ends, "and this may also affect how cold the city will become," he said.

El Niño is an abnormal warming of sea temperatures, which occurs in a cycle of two to seven years.

Weather experts here said tracking Supertyphoon "Reming" had been confusing because El Niño conditions affected the storm's behavior.

"Hawaii weather stations forecast the storm slamming into Baguio, but the next day, we were tracking Reming around Metro Manila, until it finally hit southern Philippines," he said.



VETERAN CIVIC leader Narciso Padilla donned his old Santa suit to welcome about 3,000 schoolchildren who participated in the annual Silahis ng Pasko parade in Baguio City. The Silahis is the city's way of launching Christmas revelry in the summer capital. December and January is Baguio's peak tourist season.

VINCENT CABREZA/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

The likelihood that the summer capital will experience a dip in temperatures by the Christmas weekend is low, he said.

But he clarified that Baguio traditionally experiences temperatures as low as 10 to 13 degree Celsius during the last days of the year or between January and February the following year.

"So Baguio will become very chilly during the late evenings, yet still encounter very humid lunch hours," he said.

Bautista said he has fixed the date of the "snow show" on Christmas week instead, hoping for temperatures to accommodate snow.

"The city council has offered me a plan B, but I am not too keen about it. The backup plan is to shower the city with soapsuds, but that will require environmental clearance now that it uses chemicals. And soap will definitely make the roads slippery," he said.

Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon



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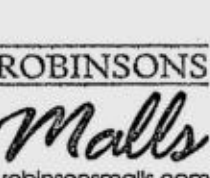


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Church population plan stupid—Duterte

DAVAO CITY—MAYOR RODRIGO DUTERTE has called the natural population control measures being espoused by the Catholic Church as stupid.

"The population control program of the Church is stupid. It is not at all working. It has been there and tested for many years but what?" Duterte, who has been known for his fiery remarks on about anything, said.

Speaking during his weekly television program aired over ABS-CBN here, Duterte cited as example the rhythm method, which is one of the natural birth control methods being pushed by the Catholic Church.

He said it has not helped in slowing population growth.

"Sex is an instinct. It's natural for

men to have sex. And this instinct is something that cannot be stopped by counting the days of the calendar and then after reaching that certain day, you do it," Duterte said.

He said what the country needs is a serious move to reduce the rate of population growth, which he said should be blamed for the poverty many Filipinos are suffering from.

The National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) has projected that the country's population for 2006 could reach 87 million from 2000's 76.5 million.

Duterte said the Catholic hierarchy should rethink its position on population control.

He said artificial ways of preventing pregnancy is not against the

sanctity of life.

"There is nothing wrong about preventing women's fertilization. What we want is to prevent unwanted pregnancy. We prevent women from getting pregnant," Duterte said.

But he clarified that he was against abortion.

During the 1st International Meeting of Experts on Emergency Contraception here last week, Duterte also publicly expressed opposition to the sex abstinence being promoted by the Church.

He said the vow of celibacy being observed by Catholic priests only caused many to become "neurotics."

The Catholic Church, he said, also made sex dirty and cheap.

In Bangkok, Thailand, a ranking

United Nations official admitted that the strong opposition from the Catholic Church has been hampering population control programs in the Philippines.

G. Giridhar, head of the country technical services team for East and South-East Asia of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), said during a discussion on population and social dynamics with the Jefferson Fall 2006 Fellows that the agency could not stand against the Catholic Church in the Philippines.

"UNFPA (is having) a hard time working its programs in the Philippines because of the strong objection of the Church on family planning," he said.

Jeffrey Tupas and Judy Quiros, Inquirer Mindanao

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NO APPROVED THERAPEUTIC CLAIMS

Students told: Help in war on graft

ILOILO CITY—JARO Archdiocesan Social Action Center (Jasac) director Monsignor Meliton Oso urged high school and college student leaders from different high schools and colleges here to help fight corruption in government.

Oso issued the call during Thursday's launching of the Operation Red Plate, a campaign initiated by the Office of the Ombudsman that aims to stop the misuse of government vehicles or the use of government vehicles outside of their official functions.

Oso, who is also the chair of People's Graftwatch, said corruption could be reduced, if not eradicated, only with the help of the citizenry.

"If we only depend on the Ombudsman, we cannot eradicate corruption," Oso said. In OIC Deputy Ombudsman for the Visayas Virginia Palanca Santiago also sought the support of the students in its Operation Red Plate.

David Israel Sinay, Inquirer Visayas

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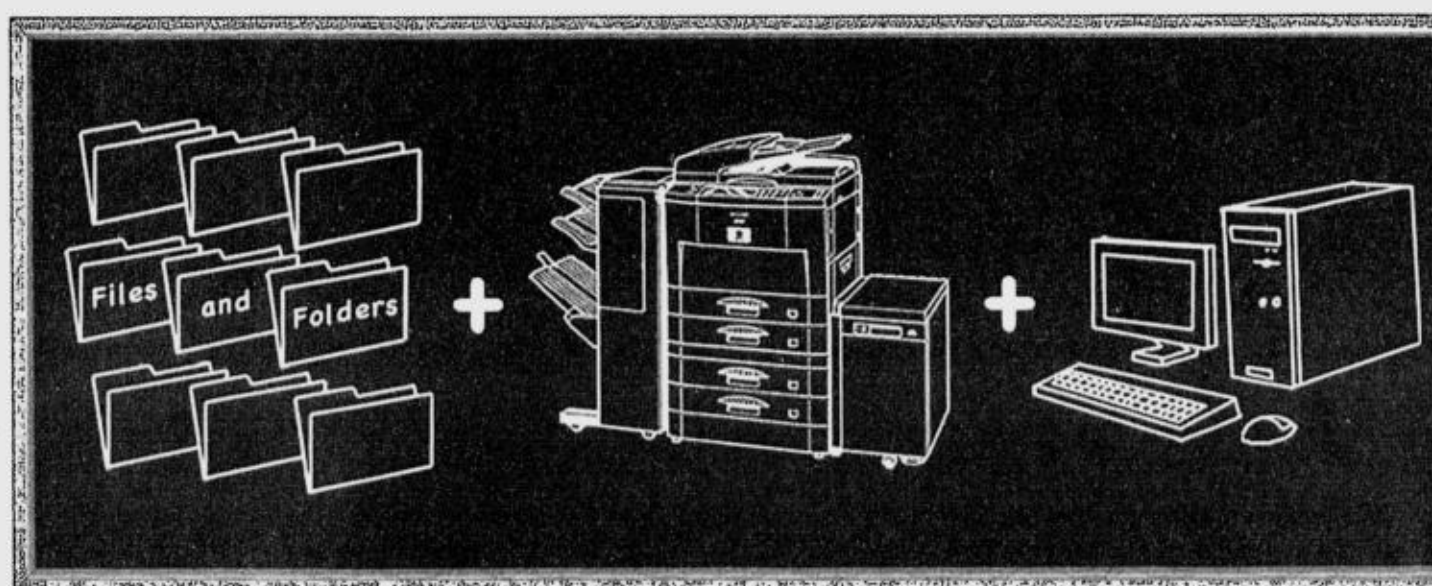
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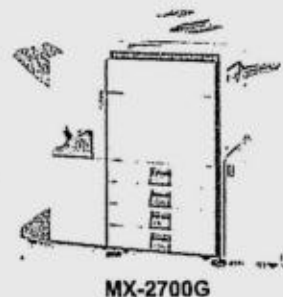
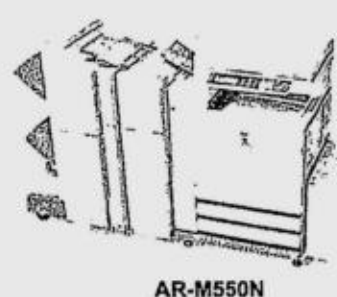
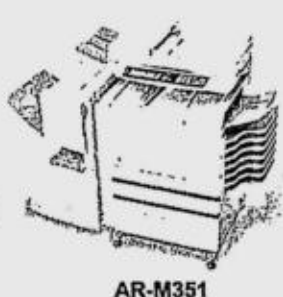
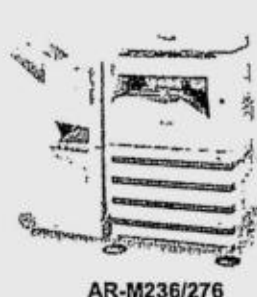
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INQUIRER *Northern Luzon*

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Rolando B. Fernandez

Baguio's Olympics of spirit

By Elizabeth Lolarga
Contributor

The summer capital bids for the site of the 2007 Delphic Games

BUSLOADS OF STUDENTS AND walk-in tourists are getting off at the Baguio Convention Center to view a wide-ranging art exhibition that is part of Wow Philippines Delphic Festival 2006. The exhibition ends on Dec. 9.

In the past, the Department of Tourism in Baguio sponsored a number of trade fairs. But the city is also a haven for artists so why not put up a showcase for their works?

The event is a kickoff to the Delphic Games, counterpart of the Olympic Games, according to Divina Bautista, president of the International Delphic Council that links arts and cultures. While the Olympics celebrate the body through games and sports, the Delphic Games acknowledge the human spirit.

Liza Ann Ilagan, fine arts professor at the University of the Philippines Baguio and overall festival coordinator, observed "a hunger among artists for this kind of activity."

She called for a meeting of sometimes competitive organizations, like the Tam-awan artists, Tahong Bundok, Baguio Arts Guild, Grupong Damili and the artists of the Victor Oreyza Community Art Space. Surprisingly, they all showed up and cooperated.

Painter Roland Bay-an of the Tam-awan said

the organizers' enthusiasm was "contagious."

Milagros Lopez, exhibit coordinator, said the *bayanihan* spirit prevailed with some group members going out of their way to enjoin individualistic artists to send their works. And they did.

Some, like Femande Fox who did pastels inspired by Picasso and Matisse, Toottee Pacis who concentrated on flora like an orchid and a bromeliad, and Danielle Florendo, teamed up with the all-male Tahong Bundok (Romy Martinez, Brando Cumpio, Darnay Demetillo, Joe Abawag, Patrick Palasi and Norman Chow) to present works in assorted media.

The more established artists included Leonard Aguinaldo with his 287 pieces of rubbercut on paper titled "Museum Files," Jordan Mang-osan and his solar paintings of harvest and planting rituals, Kidlat Tahimik with his xerography of the Philippine-American war, Rene Aquitania and his wistful rendition of his mental picture of Baguio, and Tommy Hafalla and his emulsion lifts and selenium toned silver prints of Cordillera braves.

Kawayan de Guia's thought-provoking installations share space with the works of painters who are starting their careers, like Julian Almirol who experimented with acrylic on rice husks, Paul David Magisa who used oil on sand for startlingly realistic portraits of a Gad-dang girl and a Badjao woman, Ter Enciso who painted her self-portrait surrounded by

symbols of the cosmos, and Anthony Mallari with his oil portraits on jute sack of leaf-covered women.

Lopez said "a healing occurred between two artists' groups that had a rift with the convention center."

Lawyer Damaso Bangaoet Jr., founder of the yearly Panagbenga Festival, was so impressed with the exhibit that gathered almost 100 artists that he invited the National Delphic Council to organize a similar art event in the flower fest in February.

The winners of the art contest are:

Painting—Harinam Tibon, first prize; Romeo Christo Rosete IV, second; and Edmund Andrada, third. Photography—Michael John Noble, first; and Romeo Christo Rosete IV, second.

The Delphic Festival included screenings of Akira Kurosawa, Charlie Chaplin, Cesar Hernandez and Joseph Fortin films, artists' talks, dance performance by the Neo-Nescas troupe with costumes by Rajo Laurel, and the "Hinimay ng Kalikasan" fashion show using ecological fibers.

The officers of the council will go to Berlin next month to bid for the Philippines, specifically Baguio, as site of the Delphic Games in 2007. The games were last held in Malaysia in 2005.

The current festival is considered a dress rehearsal if ever the time comes when the entire Baguio is turned into an arts village.



THIS series of woodcut art stretched over a basement wall at the Baguio Convention Center is produced by Baguio artist Leonard Aguinaldo.

VINCENT CABREZA

'Duman' fest unifies town

By Tonette Orejas
Sta. Rita, Pampanga

MATAU (LOTS OF PEOPLE), *masali* (good sales), *masaya* (in high spirits). When the 74-year-old Cristina Zapanta used these words to describe the 5th Duman Festival in Sta. Rita, Pampanga, on Dec. 2, she was not exaggerating.

From where this master maker of *duman* (native rice cereal) held court under a makeshift *palbebeuan* (where the pounding of the grains took place) beside the stage, there laid out before her around 7,000 people on Saturday night when the air was getting cold.

To their right, the centuries-old Sta. Rita de Cascia Church loomed dark, except in the globular nook where the image of the town's patron saint was lit by a faint bulb.

At the fringes were more than 50 stalls, their tables filled with all sorts of native foods.

In the flurry of eating, a stall sold ladles with wood handles and coconut shell cups that *duman* makers said kept the temperature constant and prevented the rice from burning.

When Recy Pineda, musical director of the ArtiSta. Rita, recited her poem in praise of the *duman* makers and farmers, out sprang a repertoire of old and modern Kapampangan music, including the signature song "Duman."

To these, the more than 30 homegrown artists aged 10 to 50 sang, danced and acted. They were trained by Miss Saigon choreographer Andy Alviz, a native of the town.

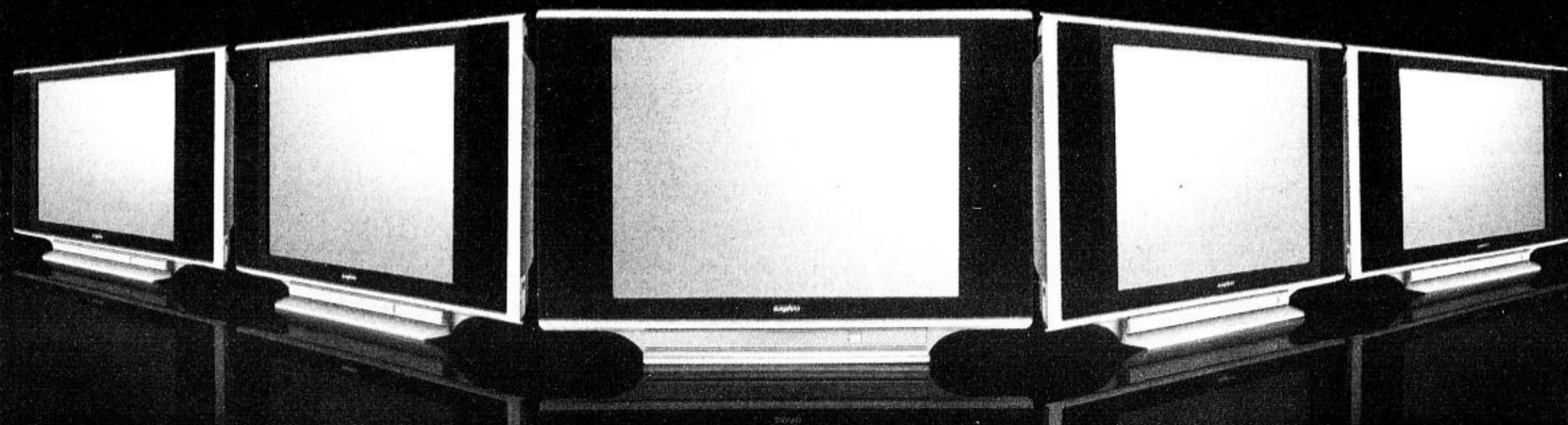
Rib-tickling and tear-inducing, the songs evoked a sentimental journey to a life that was simpler, when the farms were bountiful and the Sta. Rita of old was only a crossing to the commercial heavyweight that was Guagua and the cultural capital that was Bacolor.

At the *palbebeuan*, trios of men and women gathered around the *asung* (mortar), happily pounding their *alung* (pestle) to produce more *duman*.

The event was not only a *duman* festival. It was also a food fest as it is a cultural night.

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Dark, silent Christmas for Bicol typhoon victims

From page A1
director of the Office of Civil Defense (OCD), said power was set to be restored in Naga City today and in Legazpi City by Dec. 16 and in the entire region by Dec. 21.

Aleco had not finished restoring power in Albay (8 percent of the province was still without power a month after the last typhoon "Mileny" struck) when Reming toppled electric poles, transformers and power stations.

History's worst typhoon

Reming also severely damaged Aleco's office, equipment, trucks and service vehicles, according to Realzoa.

"Now, we do not even know where to start assessing the damage. This was the worst typhoon in history," Realzoa said.

Civil defense officials confirmed 526 dead, mostly around Mayon volcano, and another 740 missing.

The civil defense office said the typhoon and the mudslides destroyed or damaged 250,000 houses and affected 1.54 million people, nearly 83,000 of whom had sought refuge at evacuation centers.

It put the cost of the damage to buildings, infrastructure and agriculture at P1.2 billion.

Villagers are drawing water from wells and are using pumps. The Department of Health-Bicol has deployed teams to educate people on water chlorination. Water-purifying plants have been put up in some areas, according to the OCD.

Since the typhoon struck, people had been going around Legazpi looking for potable water in the few water refilling stations open. After finding one, they still had to join the

long queue of thirsty buyers.

People were also queuing when buying food supplies, milk for infants, gasoline, medicine and liquefied petroleum gas.

Gasoline shortage

Only one gasoline station was open in Legazpi and not all of its pumps were working.

Motorists still had to drive to neighboring Daraga town, where three stations were open.

The gasoline shortage paralyzed more than 50 percent of the public utility vehicles.

Communication was still a problem. In the entire Bicol, only one mobile network was working three days after Reming struck.

Transmission towers in Naga City and Legazpi were toppled, paralyzing the operations of most radio stations.

Albay Gov. Fernando Gonzales complained about the slow clearing of highways and roads by the Department of Public Works and Highways, saying that he saw only one bulldozer doing the job. The DPWH vowed to finish road-clearing operations by Friday.

Hospital damaged

Sorsogon remained without electricity and all communications facilities were still down. No casualty was reported but houses, buildings and crops were damaged.

On the island province of Catanduanes, where Reming made its landfall, 14,933 houses were destroyed and 17,258 were damaged, according to Gov. Leandro Verceles.

Damage to agriculture and infrastructure was placed at P370.8 million.

Verceles estimated the damage to the operating room of the East-



RIVERS OF MUD and volcanic ash that covered this road out of a village in Legazpi City are now being cleared by bulldozers.

ern Bicol Medical Center in Virac at P30 million.

Financial assistance

Wearing a black-colored blouse, Ms Arroyo commiserated with victims in Pasacao, Camarines Sur and Guinobatan, Albay. She carried young evacuees in her arms.

The President gave some bereaved families P5,000 for each fatality and distributed relief goods.

Aida Tolero of Barangay Binatayan in Daraga thanked the President for the "gift," saying it would go a long way in helping her rebuild her life.

Tolero lost a niece after torrents of mud from the slopes of

Mayon washed out their house.

In Pasacao, Merlita Lanuza, 47, said her house was destroyed and that she hoped she could be provided some financial assistance to start rebuilding her house. But she said she was also very happy that the President came to visit them.

Lanuza said she also wished the President could help them rebuild their lives by providing them assistance to start a small store. She said their small store and their house were gone.

Entourage

When Ms Arroyo came to her, Lanuza could only smile and could not say anything but accept

the plastic bag with relief goods handed to her.

Ms Arroyo's three-helicopter entourage arrived at the Philippine Ports Authority office in Pasacao at 10:20 a.m. and left for Albay at 10:50 a.m.

She was accompanied by Vice President Noli de Castro, Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya Jr., her son Dato Arroyo and Gina de Venecia.

Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya Jr. said the P1 billion ordered released by the President for the hardest-hit areas was already available in cash.

Andaya said the P1 billion was an initial release, just to "normalize" the situation and to respond to the basic needs of the victims like food and electricity.

"The good thing right now is that we have sufficient cash to cover all the necessary funding requirement, so there would be no problem," he said.

Food, medicine from Indonesia

The country continues to receive aid from other countries.

At first light yesterday, two C-130 transport aircraft from Indonesia touched down in Legazpi, carrying more than 12 tons of food and medicine.

A small team of Spanish firemen set up a field hospital nearby for the injured survivors.

Other pledges of support include:

- \$200,000 from the Chinese government.
- \$100,000 from South Korea.
- A total of 150 tents, 900 rolls of plastic sheets, 60 pieces of sleeping mattresses, and 20 sets of 22V generators from the Japan International Cooperation Agency.
- Relief supplies worth

\$50,000, including medicine, food, blankets and tents, from Singapore.

• A total of P3.4 million from Muntinlupa City for Calabanga and Siruma towns in Camarines Sur, and Sta. Cruz, Marinduque.

• An unspecified amount from the League of Cities of the Philippines. (See Page A17)

• P100,000 from the Regional Development Council in Eastern Visayas.

World Vision, an international Christian relief and development organization, has started its assessment of the tragedy and has rallied support among its international allies worldwide.

For its part, the International Red Cross has launched a \$7.3-million emergency appeal to help the Philippines.

Search operations extended

Ms Arroyo ordered the extension of the search and retrieval operations for 10 days in mud-splattered areas in Legazpi City, Daraga and Guinobatan.

"The search for victims must continue as we tend to the sick and hungry in the evacuation centers, but we must now also push on the search for permanent solutions bearing upon the root cause of these grave calamities," she added.

But Daniel Fernandez, a member of the Spanish search and rescue team BUSE, said "the search for life is over."

Teams from the health department were making their way to villages to help deal with the dead. Many unclaimed bodies have been buried in shallow graves but many more are still lying unrecovered. With reports from Jocelyn R. Uy in Manila; Ven S. Labro and David Israel Sinay, Inquirer Visayas

Man, 2 sons adrift for 18 hours saved by boat seat

From page A1
Jojie, 24, and Benito Benitez Jr., 40—all residents of Barangay Villahermosa in Rapu-Rapu—struggled to survive all through the night of Thursday when they were carried away by strong winds and waves from the seashore.

Thinking the typhoon was over, the four tried to maneuver the boat owned by the Dagsils

through the water to a safe place on the shore at about 12:30 p.m.

After a few minutes, strong winds struck, accompanied by a downpour, which prevented them from landing on the shore.

All of a sudden, strong waves engulfed them and the motorized boat, carrying them away from the shore.

The four helplessly drifted at sea, with their lives at the mercy of nature, until they found a

wooden seat from the boat that they had tried to save.

Floated

"We held tightly to the seat and used it as a float," Dagsil said. While at sea for 18 hours, they prayed hard for their recovery.

Fatigue, hunger and moments of hopelessness gripped them all throughout their ordeal as nature unleashed its wrath.

"We took turns in keeping ourselves afloat by using our hands. We ate whatever things we found that could be eaten," Dagsil recalled.

He said he and his companions caught fish that came into contact with their wounded bodies and ate them.

At about 6 a.m., Friday, the typhoon subsided.

Dagsil and his companions found themselves off the shore of Barangay

Calolbon, San Andres, Catanduanes.

Happy but very weary, they went home on Saturday, taking an RSL Shipping Line vessel that arrived at the Tabaco international seaport at about 4 p.m. the same day.

'God is great'

Dagsil's wife Beverly, who had earlier informed their relatives that her husband, two sons and Benitez were missing and had lost hope of

finding them alive, was so surprised and cried aloud when she learned that they all survived and were about to return home on Sunday.

"God is great!" she said.

For their "second life," the Dagsils will be holding a celebration with a thanksgiving Mass in the village.

They have invited all their neighbors and friends. Five large pigs will be butchered, Dagsil said.

How 2 men escaped from Catanduanes by land and sea

From page A1
Architect Sael Afuang and subcontractor Ronald Calderon, who arrived in Virac on Nov. 28 after taking the usual bus-ferry-bus route, found themselves on the receiving end of Supertyphoon "Reming's" wrath two days later.

With gusts reaching 265 kilometers per hour, Reming made landfall in Catanduanes on Nov. 30, pummeling the province for hours.

Afuang and Calderon were in a house 500 meters away from the job site at the foot of a hill in Barangay Sto. Niño when the typhoon struck.

"The doors and windows were shut, but we could still hear the howling wind. It was so loud that we did not even realize the elec-

tric post across the street had already been toppled," Afuang said.

When the typhoon finally calmed down at around 3 p.m. on Nov. 30, Afuang and Calderon, whose mobile phones were rendered useless by the lack of a signal in the area, decided to wade through waist-high floods to check on about 20 workers staying in the clergy house.

2-M construction wasted

There they found more than a year of construction work (worth about P2 million) wasted. The stocked windowpanes and tiles were broken and strewn around. The storage area had lost its roof, and the second-story ceiling had crashed.

"We're thankful nobody was hurt. We learned the ceiling

crashed just minutes after the workers had left the second floor," Afuang said.

But what was surprising, he added, was that the debris were found meters away from where they should have landed. "That's how strong the wind was," he said.

Outside, Calderon saw felled coconut trees which were "like folded umbrellas."

He also saw galvanized iron roofing sheets wrapped around the topmost parts of pili trees, which were about as tall as coconut trees.

Huddled family members were seen eating outside their house, which no longer had a roof. A steel structure for a gazebo was almost

rooted out of its foundation. A truck carrying fruits and vegetables lay on its side in the middle of the road. The hills, which used to be green, were reduced to big brown mounds.

No boats, planes

The following day, Afuang went to the San Andres pier at 7 a.m. to make reservations for the trip home. He feared the offices would be closed, but was shocked to discover the offices were no longer there.

He also checked with Asian Spirit to see if there were available flights out of Virac, but learned that flights had been suspended because of communication problems.

Afuang, Calderon and their coworkers' only bet was the ferry MV Calixta III, which was sched-

uled to leave the pier at 1 p.m.

On the way back to his colleagues, Afuang witnessed how Virac residents tried to bring life back to normal.

"People were lining up at hardware stores to buy tools and iron sheets, hoping to fix their damaged houses. There were more people at hardware stores than at grocery shops. Some had already laid out palay to dry outside their houses. Some pawnshops were even open," Afuang recalled.

By land and sea

When the group arrived by jeepney at the San Andres pier at around 10:30 a.m., the ferry was filled with people, most of whom were standing, and was already set to leave.

Once the ferry dropped them off at Tabaco pier in Albay, they took a series of tricycle and jeepney rides which ended when they reached two broken bridges.

There they witnessed the enterprising nature of some Albay residents, who offered to carry them across the river for P30 each.

When they reached Ligao, Albay, the workers took a two-hour jeepney ride toward Naga City in Camarines Sur. There, at 8:30 p.m., they were finally able to get a bus ride to Metro Manila.

At 4:30 a.m. the following day, the harried workers were safe home.

Which, unfortunately, could not be said about thousands of Catanduanes residents who had lost their houses.

Images of utter despair move veteran photojournalist to tears

From page A1
score how different—how destructive—Reming was compared to other major calamities he had covered, including the Southern Leyte killer landslide in February.

Unlike many of the country's past disasters wherein survivors were able to find a safe, untouched territory after an hour's ride or two, Reming's aftermath in Bicol seemed to offer no such horizon for the thousands of people who fled

the torrents of mud and rocks that eventually buried their homes.

Describing what his camera may have missed while scanning the devastation from his service vehicle last week, Bacasmas could still vividly recall vignettes of despair:

Shots of despair

• A woman sitting by the road, next to a three-foot image of the Sto. Niño which she had apparently managed to rescue from her

house. "The Sto. Niño was already naked."

• An array of "body parts" strewn around a town plaza for sorting and identification.

• The corpse of a woman and the infant she was still cradling.

• Menfolk huddled by the road and sharing some (rescued) liquor, apparently just too drained to start repairing anything or clear any debris.

• A grotto of the Virgin Mary which "miraculously" emerged as

the only structure left standing amid a flattened neighborhood.

• A woman holding a spoon—"she was sure it was her spoon"—on top of her entombed two-story house.

• A man managing to save his computer from his room by tearing a hole through the roof of his house, the only part of the structure that was still above-ground.

• Families building makeshift tents as dusk approached, on the spots where they thought their

homes stood several feet beneath.

• Some of the tents flickered faintly as night finally came, thanks to candles and kerosene lamps. Others just disappeared in the dark.

Subject talks

But Bacasmas says there was one photo-shoot in Barangay Tagas, Daraga town in Albay that had his eyes welling up. This was when the subject inside the frame did more than just stand

still—but also spoke to that supposedly detached being behind the camera.

"All he said was 'we have nothing left except the clothes we have on,'" Bacasmas recalls the subject as saying.

The "we" referred to the father and the infant child he was carrying, set against the ruins of his village and, farther, against the bluish, seemingly serene cone of Mayon. It was the main photo on the INQUIRER front page on Sunday.

Smell test developed to determine insanity

From page A1
A University of Melbourne team of researchers said they had discovered a link between a declining sense of smell and disorders such as schizophrenia and obsessive-compulsive disorder.

In a test conducted by health provider Melbourne Health, 81 young subjects at risk of becoming

psychotic were shown a series of 40 cards whose smell they had to match up with a list of four odors, such as coffee, roses, oranges and petrol.

The researchers found that those who later went on to develop a mental illness had difficulty identifying more than half the odors.

Christos Pantelis, from the

university's Melbourne Neuropsychiatry Center, said that was because such conditions could affect the frontal lobe, the area of the brain used to analyze and identify smells.

"An abnormal sense of smell may indicate problems in this thinking' area of the brain," he told Agence France Presse.

In the young people who had not yet become ill, the test was able to pick up an impairment in normal development, Pantelis said.

At the other end of the spectrum, the test could help diagnose degenerative brain diseases, such as Alzheimer's, Huntington's and Parkinson's diseases, in which frontal lobe

ability deteriorated.

Complemented

"The importance of the test is that it is sensitive very early on in some psychiatric and neurodegenerative disorders," Pantelis said.

He hoped the test, which is currently only used in research, would become established as a clinical tool as a result of the team's work.

Pantelis, however, stressed that the scratch and smell test could not necessarily predict later problems on its own, and merely complemented other tests used by clinicians.

"We hope this will be a test that will become more available and will help doctors diagnose," he said.

AFP

US tells RP: Give us Smith until judicial process completed

From page A1
secretary for special concerns, told a press briefing that the DFA received the note verbale shortly before noon.

In the document, the US Embassy said it "reaffirms the right of the United States military authorities to exercise custody of any United States personnel over whom the Philippines is to exercise jurisdiction until completion of all judicial proceedings, notably in the ongoing legal case of ... Smith."

The DFA sent Pozon's court a copy of the diplomatic note at past 1 p.m.

In the transmittal letter signed by Seguis, the DFA affirmed a provision of the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement giving US authorities custody over its servicemen facing criminal proceedings in Philippine courts.

Seguis told the court: "The department wishes to assure you of its continuing cooperation in this matter."

According to Seguis, the note verbale is a reiteration, of the US Embassy's ear-

lier position on the custody issue from the very beginning of the rape case.

The four Marines were actually in the embassy's custody for the duration of the trial.

"Mr. Smith may be transferred to the custody of the United States authorities only upon the authority of the court," Seguis said.

Supt. Serafin Barretto Jr., Bureau of Jail Management and Penology regional director, told reporters that "if the judge orders that Smith should be transferred to a different detention center, we will follow."

Earlier in the day, Dean Amado Valdez of the University of the East College of Law told the INQUIRER that US authorities should ask the Makati court to give them continued custody over Smith if they wanted to hold him while his conviction was under appeal.

"They should ask the Makati court for this relief. If the [Philippine] government will just turn him over to

them, then it will not be looking after its own interest," Valdez, a former executive director of the Presidential Commission on the VFA, said in a phone interview.

And if the court grants US authorities custody over the convict pending the Supreme Court ruling on the finality of the verdict of life imprisonment against him, he should be held in a facility other than the US Embassy, Valdez said.

Sleepless night

Holding Smith at the US Embassy "would be unacceptable because the embassy is no longer Philippine territory," the law dean said. "How can you verify the circumstances of the convict is if he's being kept in the embassy? You'd need to go through diplomatic channels for that."

In the jail crammed with crime suspects of all stripes, the 21-year-old Smith spent a sleepless night as the lone detainee in a cell given him for security considerations.

"Considering what he went through, he looks all right, but he told me that he hardly slept, that he didn't sleep well," said Enrico Uyehara, counsel for Smith's coaccused Lance Cpl. Dominic Duplantis, who was acquitted along with Lance Cpl. Keith Silkwood and Staff Sgt. Chad Carpentier.

Duplantis, Silkwood and Carpentier were flown back to their military unit, the 31st Marine Expeditionary Force based in Okinawa, Japan, hours after Pozon acquitted them of conspiring with Smith to rape "Nicole" before midnight on Nov. 1, 2005.

Smith was left behind, handcuffed and brought to the MCJ on Pozon's orders.

Smith was dressed in a white shirt, a pair of shorts and slippers when jail guards led him to a room to meet Uyehara yesterday morning.

While he was not given a time limit for his visit, the lawyer said he spoke with the Marine for less than an hour.

"I was not allowed in his quarters. I

was just led to a room and they brought him there. I spent a longer time to get through security ... Security was very strict and they really checked me," Uyehara said, adding:

"He just said he's glad I took the time to visit him. I tried to cheer him up, and there were instances that he smiled, though I don't know if he just did that because he knew I was really trying to cheer him up."

High level of security

Uyehara said he did not know where Smith had spent the night.

But the jail warden, Supt. Delvic Oreiro, said Smith was separated from the rest of the 634 other inmates.

Oreiro denied reports that Smith, the only convict in the jailhouse for accused felons facing trial, was being given special treatment.

"My general statement is there is no VIP treatment given to him. It's just that the level of security for him is different. He is in a safe and secure area with [guards] from the BJMP," Oreiro said.

US Embassy people were seen entering the MCJ even before visiting hours began at 9:30 a.m. yesterday.

It was unclear whether such an accommodation fell under a jailhouse rule spelled out on a note hanging on the entry gate: "Visitation schedules are subject to change without prior notice as the situation may arise."

Seguis said the DFA was coordinating with the Department of Justice "on the matter, including the Philippines' compliance with its treaty obligations."

He said that under Article V, paragraph 6 of the VFA, "the custody of any United States personnel over whom the Philippines is to exercise jurisdiction shall immediately reside with United States military authorities, if they so request from the commission of the offense until the completion of all judicial proceedings."

Said Zosimo Paredes, executive director of the VFA Commission, in a phone interview: "The issue was already settled when the embassy had custody of the US servicemen when the accusation was made and before the warrant of arrest was issued. Judge Pozon 'unsettled' it [with the order to bring Smith to the MCJ] kaya nagkagulo ngayon (that's why there is this confusion)."

Paredes stood by the earlier statement he made over radio station dzBB that Pozon's order for Smith to be held at the MCJ was "a violation of the provision of the VFA."

"It was tantamount to abuse of discretion. It should have been status quo," he told dzBB.

He said the custody issue was no longer "debatable" because it was "very clear" in the VFA that custody of Smith would remain with US authorities until the "final determination" of the case by the Supreme Court.

No specified period

"The earlier that the note verbale is answered, the better," Paredes said.

He said that as it was during the trial, Philippine authorities would ensure that Smith remained in the Philippines even while under US custody while the decision was on appeal.

The VFA does not say if there is a period within which the Court of Appeals or the Supreme Court should decide on an appeal, unlike in the trial which should be completed within a year, he said.

Asked by the INQUIRER if the custody issue was among the provisions that exemplified how the Philippines appeared to be on the losing end of the VFA, Paredes said: "I believe so."

He cited the Japan-US Status of Forces Agreement (Sofa) stating that after a case had been filed against US military personnel, the Japanese government automatically got custody of the accused.

"The Sofa is a good model. But for us, we have to wait until the case is decided with finality by the Supreme Court before we can have custody," Paredes said.

For his part, Seguis said the VFA could be subject to a review. But he said Smith's case "should be finished first, and the custody issue settled, and then we can talk about the VFA."

But DFA spokesperson Ed Malaya, responding to the question of whether the VFA superseded the court regarding the custody issue, said: "The VFA does not supersede court authority. The VFA being a treaty is part of the laws of the land. The courts interpret the laws of the land."

Smith's lead counsel

Jose Justiniano, counsel for Silkwood, yesterday filed an entry of appearance to inform Pozon's court that he had been designated as Smith's lead counsel.

"I got a call [from a lawyer with] the US Marines who told me that Smith wants me to represent him. I said it's OK with me ... though there was no reason. So I am now the lead counsel of Smith's legal team," Justiniano said over the phone.

But Benjamin Formoso, the lead lawyer who presented Smith's defense in court, said he had yet to be told to withdraw.

"But we told them that if they want us to withdraw, then we would. That is the decision of the client and there is nothing we could do about it," Formoso said when reached for comment.

Justiniano filed an urgent motion yesterday afternoon asking Pozon to recall his order committing Smith at the MCJ and return the convicted soldier to US custody.

The motion had the conformity of the DOJ.

'Sellout'
Nicole's private lawyer, Evalyn Ursua, described the government's agreement as "a sellout, a betrayal."

She said she would file an opposition to the motion today.

At a press conference in Quezon City, Ursua also said: "The VFA does not supplant Philippine laws."

She said that even under the VFA, an American found guilty of a capital offense should be kept in a Philippine detention facility. With reports from Norman Bordadora, Jocelyn R. Uy and DJ Yap

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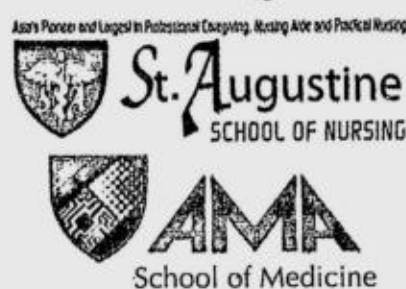
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Medal within reach of bowlers

By Ted S. Melendres
Sports Editor

DOHA, QATAR—THE TRIUMVIRATE OF Paeng Nepomuceno, Tyrone Ongpauco and Chester King wound up second after the first three games in tenpin bowling's men's trios even as Filipino hopes flickered and died on the other fronts Tuesday in the 15th Asian Games here.

The agonizing wait for a first medal stretched another day.

But there is still much to look forward to for the embattled 227-strong Philippine contingent as five boxers moved within a win of a sure bronze medal in their weight classes.

Successive victories late Monday night by light flyweight Godfrey Castro, bantamweight Joan Tipon and lightweight Gilbert Basadre vaulted them into the quarterfinals and cushioned the defeat Tuesday of super lightweight Delfin Boholst against a South Korean army paratrooper.

Boholst absorbed a stinging 12-31 beating at the hands of Shin Myung-hoon.

The 23-year-old Asiad first-timer was the first Filipino boxer to bow out, ending at six

match wins the amazing run of the RP boxing squad at the Aspire 5 Hall.

Nepomuceno, Ongpauco and King totaled 1989 in the trios, a mere nine pins behind Malaysia's Team 2 and eight ahead of Japan's Team 1. The next three games will be played Wednesday.

The four-time World Cup champion Nepomuceno missed a perfect third game in towing the second RP team with 740 pinfalls on strings of 246, 196 and 298. King and Ongpauco scored a 644 and 605, respectively.

The RP Team 1 of Markwin Tee, CJ Suarez and Biboy Rivera lay in 10th spot, their cause hurt by the 558 of 2004 World Cup champion Suarez.

Elsewhere, Cecil Mamiit dropped his second straight match as the RP squad bowed to second seed Chinese Taipei, 1-2, and out of contention in the men's tennis team event.

Mamiit bowed to Lu Yen-hsun, 6-2, 3-6, 4-6.

In the first match, Eric Taino yielded serve five times and was routed by Wang Yezhuo, 2-6, 2-6. Patrick John Tierro and

Johnny Arcilla won the inconsequential doubles over Chen Ti and Yi Chu-huan, 7-6, 6-4.

Filipino bidders looked lost on the snooker tables as everyone—save for Leonardo Andam—lost their matches to the Iraqis, 1-3, at the Al-Sadd Multi-Purpose Hall.

Andam overcame Reenat Dunkha, 47-36, before bowing to Firas Kamel Shaba, 21-79, and to Shaba and Reenat Dunkha, 12-63, in partnership with Alvin Punzalan. Felipe Tauru Jr. bowed to Firas Kamel Shaba, 17-48.

Cycling fell short of a medal as Marites Bitbit, the first to be released at the starting line, settled for seventh place in the women's individual time trial with a time of 35 minutes and 21.98 seconds at the Al-Khor Road Course. China's Li Meifang took the gold in 31:17.85.

Alvin Amposta and Nilo Cordova advanced to the finals of the men's lightweight



More Asian Games and Sports stories on A29 to 32

double sculls by finishing second in 3:44.15 minutes to North Korea's Kim Kyong-un and Pae Sang-hyok (3:37.35).

The veteran pair of Benjamin Tolentino, a triple gold medalist in last year's Southeast Asian Games, and Jose Rodriguez brought up the rear in their semifinal heat of the men's double scull and missed the medal races Wednesday. They timed 3:34.84 in the wavy waters of Doha's West Bay Lagoon.

The shooters were off-target as Carolino Gonzales ended up 34th with a score of 531 in the 50m pistol qualifying round ruled by China's Xu Kun (565) and Susan Aguado settled for 36th with 550 in the 25m pistol eliminations topped by China's Cheng Ying (587) at the Hamad Aquatic Center.

Ernest Lorenzo Dee finished second to India's Ankur Poseria in Heat 2 of the men's 50m butterfly at 26.13 seconds, just 0.21 of

a second off the Indian.

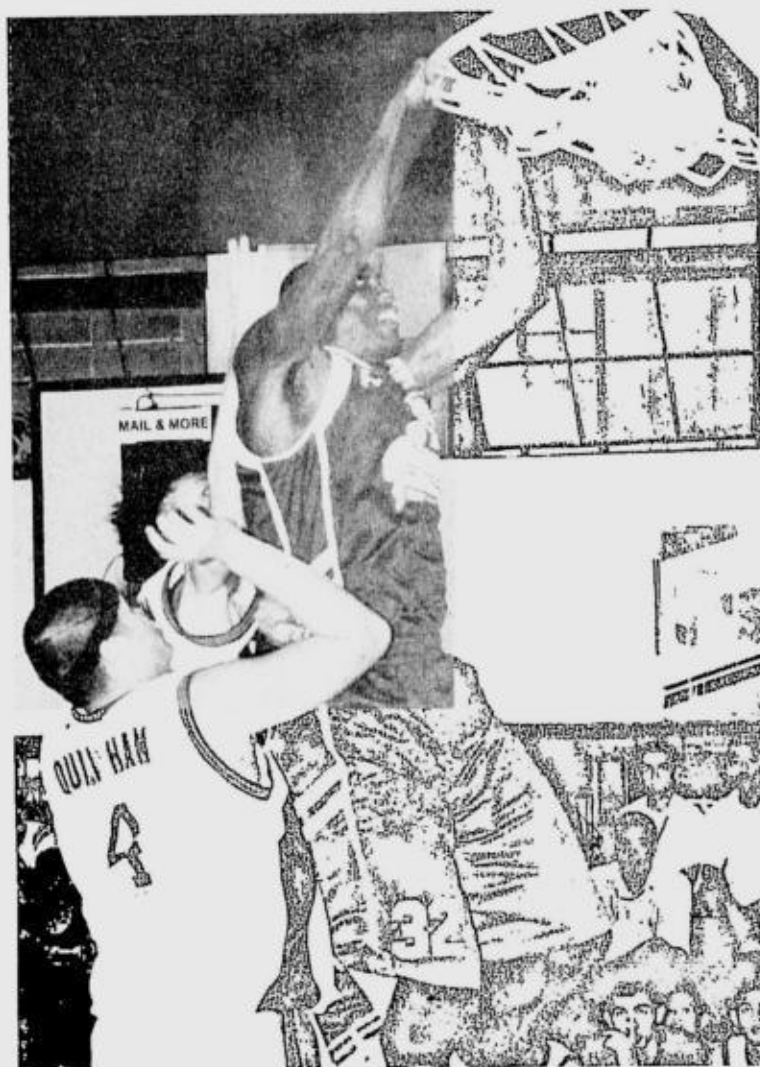
Filipino-American James Walsh (26.02) was fifth in his heat of 50m butterfly, Erica Totten (27.91) was seventh in a field of eight in the 50m freestyle, Ryan Arabejo (1:01.57) was also seventh in the 100m backstroke, and Denjylie Cordero (1:17.33) came in last in the 100 breaststroke.

The RP quartet of Kendrick Uy, Daniel Coackley, Walsh and Miguel Molina advanced to the medal race with a fourth-place windup in the second of two heats of the 4x100m freestyle relay. The Filipinos timed 3:31.91, far behind the 3:23.35 of the winning Chinese squad.

Unbeaten favorite Chinese Taipei dealt Filipino batters a fourth straight beating, 15-0, at the Al-Rayyan Sports Club.

In soft tennis, Orlando Silvoza II produced the only victory for the Filipinos, winning 4-1, against the Maldives' Fareeh Ibrahim in the group stage of the men's singles.

Petrona Bantay was routed, 4-0, by China's Jiang Ting and then by Chinese Taipei's Chiang Wan-chi; Dante Belen by South Korea's Kim Kyung-ryun; and John Michael Enriquez by Japan's Hidenori Shinohara.



SAM EKWE of Magnolia (right) dunks over JR Quiñahan of Mail and More. Quiñahan had the last laugh, though as the Comets beat Ekwe's Spinners in their game yesterday.

ERIK ARAZAS

Big men spark Toyota; Mail and More scores

By Jasmine W. Payo

GAMES TOMORROW (Olivarez College Sports Center)
2 p.m.—Sista vs Cebuana Lhuillier
4 p.m.—Magnolia TeleTech

FINDING A SURPRISE PERFORMER IN ERIC Rodriguez, the Toyota Otis Sparks slipped past the favored Harbour Centre Port Masters, 64-60, in the PBL Silver Cup yesterday at the Letran Gym.

Rodriguez drilled in seven points in the final canto, including a crucial low-post basket that lifted the Sparks, 60-57, at the 1:45 mark.

"Our big men played so well," said Sparks coach Louie Alas. "For the first time, we won in rebounding."

Rodriguez delivered his best performance this conference for a game-high 17 markers and nine rebounds.

Marvin Cruz also cushioned the Sparks edge by sinking three of four free throws in the last 12 seconds.

Earlier, the Mail and More Comets banked on another big performance by JR Quiñahan in a 67-58 triumph over the Magnolia Spinners.

Quiñahan, coming off a 16-point performance versus Sista, sizzled with 21 points, nine rebounds, four blocks and two assists.

"He's proving to be the vital cog of this team," said Comets coach Lawrence Chongson.

The Comets built on a strong second-quarter charge behind Quiñahan, Jorel Canizares and Marvin Yambao for a 41-31 halftime spread.

Mail and More joined Sista at 3-2. Toyota Otis and Harbour Centre wound up tied at 2-2 with Cebuana Lhuillier-Pera Padala and TeleTech.

Magnolia, a pre-season favorite after acquiring several collegiate stars, fell to 1-3.

The wide-bodied Quiñahan also got the upperhand in his anticipated match up versus 6-foot-8 Nigerian Sam Ekwe.

Ekwe finished with 18 markers and 16 boards, but got little support from Magnolia's top guns.

The scores:

First Game

MAIL AND MORE 67—Quiñahan 21, Yambao 10, Bravo 8, David 8, Canizares 7, Espiritu 6, Cuyokang 5, Del Rosario 2, Pribidas 0, Buenate 0, Viray 0.

MAGNOLIA 58—Ekwe 18, Aljamal 9, Custodio 7, Chan 6, Escobal 5, Gamalinda 4, Angeles 3, Tagana 2, Menor 2, Barcelano 2, Natividad 0, Villanueva 0, Bomboe 0.

Quarters: 14-13, 41-31, 57-42, 67-58

Second Game

TOYOTA OTIS 64—Rodriguez 17, Cruz 15, Daa 14, Cabahug 7, Baluyot 4, Jazul 3, Dedicataria 2, Coronel 2, Jaime 0, Alcaraz 0, Quinday 0, Guevarra 0, Fajardo 0, Yabut 0.

HARBOUR CENTRE 60—Intal 14, Juntilla 11, Gaco 9, Lanete 8, Capati 6, Vergara 5, Ortiguerra 2, Alonzo 2, Asoro 1, Gamboa 1, Sagundel 1, Arana 0.

Quarters: 17-18, 29-33, 47-47, 64-60

RP third in 'Bimp' Games

THE PHILIPPINES, represented by Team Mindanao, collected a total of 30 medals to place third among 12 focus areas in the overall team standings in the recent 5th Bimp-Eaga (Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines-East Asean Growth Area) Games in Makassar, Indonesia.

Swimmer Nikita Dacera was adjudged as the most outstanding Filipino athlete, winning five of the 13 gold medals hauled by Team Mindanao to finish third behind eventual champion Sabah and South Sulawesi and improved its fourth place finish in the last edition of the biennial meet in Sabah, Malaysia. The country also won 12 silver and five bronze medals.

Dacera, 19, a freshman student at the Notre Dame of Dadiangas University in General Santos City, dominated the field in the 200m free (2:00.80), 200m back (4:00.13), 200m butterfly (2:15.93), 400m free (2:25.43) and 1,500m free (16:58.53).

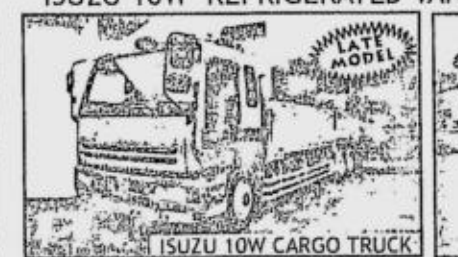
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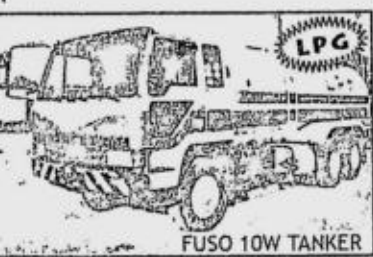
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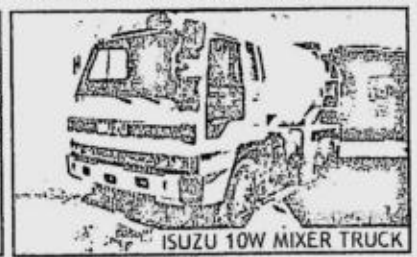
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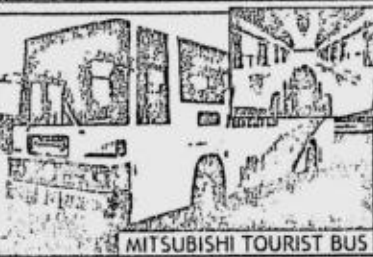
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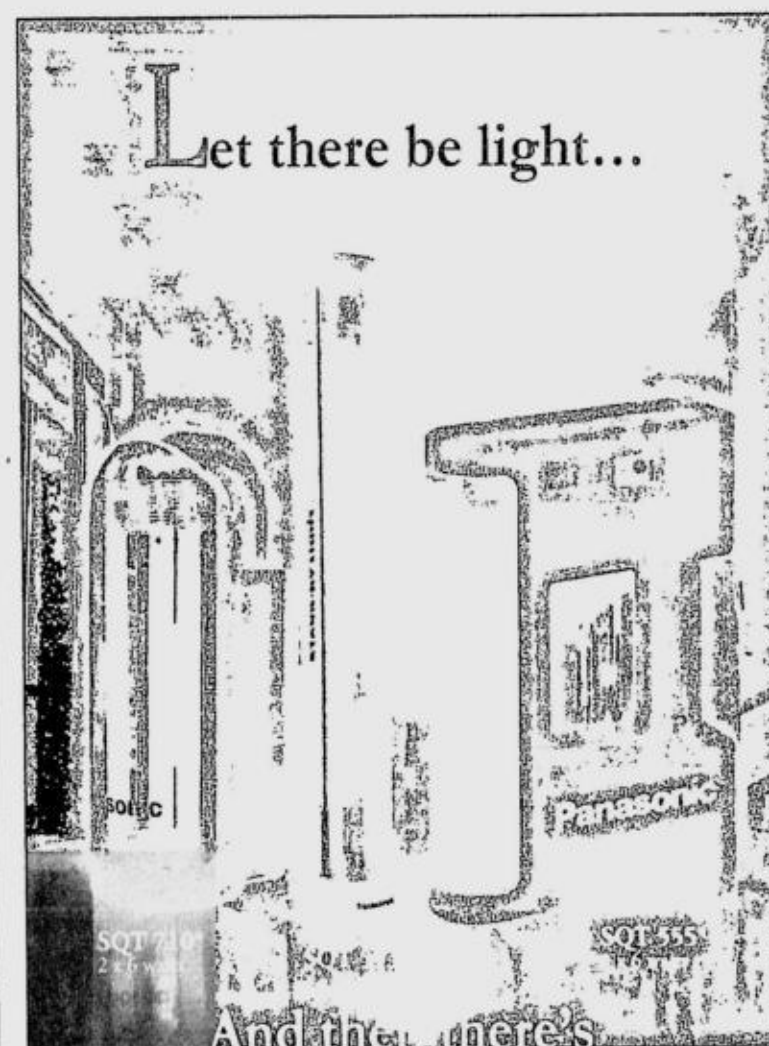


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Labor official, POEA lawyers in graft case

Trader claims suspects asked for P400,000 in exchange for a license



By Margaux C. Ortiz

A TOP OFFICIAL OF THE NATIONAL Labor Relations Commission (NLRC) and two lawyers of the Philippine Overseas Employment Association (POEA) face graft charges for allegedly demanding money from a businesswoman.

National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) Director Nestor Mantaring identified the suspects as NLRC Commissioner Victoriano Calaycay, 58, of Sampaloc, Manila and POEA lawyers Zomer Ochavillo of Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City and Augustus Hidalgo of Cubao, Quezon City.

Also charged was businessman Dennis Gabionza, of Sampaloc, Manila, who was arrested during an entrapment operation conducted last Dec. 1, according to NBI Special Action Unit (SAU) chief Vicente de Guzman III.

"The suspects now face charges for violating the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act in the Office of the Ombudsman," De Guzman added.

The investigation report submitted by De Guzman's unit showed that businesswoman Jo-

celyn Enriquez had accused the suspects of demanding P400,000 from her in exchange for processing a license that would allow her to operate a recruitment agency in the country.

Enriquez told NBI investigators that the suspects had allegedly asked her for a downpayment of P200,000.

On Dec. 1, the complainant informed the NBI that Hidalgo told her to meet them in a Manila hotel for the payoff. NBI SAU operatives arrested the four men after Enriquez gave them P200,000 in marked bills, De Guzman said.

Calaycay and the three other suspects were brought to the NBI where they were detained over the weekend after inquest proceedings at the Manila City Prosecutor's Office on Saturday.

The NBI official added that the four men would also be subjected to preliminary investigation for alleged direct bribery charges.

Calaycay, Ochavillo, Hidalgo and Gabionza were released on Monday night after posting bail of P30,000 each for their provisional liberty.

SANTA'S HELPER

LIFE-SIZE Santa Claus figures get a final look over before they are sold to Christmas shoppers at this sidewalk stall on Arellano Avenue in Manila.

ERIK ARAZAS

Makati school awaits safety certification before it reopens

By Tarra V. Quismundo

STUDENTS OF SAN ISIDRO National High School in Makati City will remain on holiday until the end of the week as experts have yet to ascertain if the school is already safe for classes to resume.

In a statement, Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay yesterday said experts would conduct yet another test in and around the campus this week to measure chemical levels in the area. The school would only be reopened when it is declared safe of toxic chemicals, he added.

Different chemicals spilled inside the school laboratory on Nov. 26 when a cabinet containing the substances that was mounted on a wall suddenly collapsed.

Although emergency workers had already cleared the laboratory of the spilled chemicals and other debris, the school has remained closed.

"Until we receive a certifica-

tion from the Makati task force that the school is truly safe for the school children, other school personnel and the general public, we will continue with the suspension of classes," said Binay, referring to the team of toxicology experts and emergency workers tasked to decontaminate the four-story school.

Results of initial tests conducted on Nov. 29 by experts from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the labor department's Occupational Safety and Health Center (OSHC) showed that "hazardous chemical compounds" in the school and its surroundings were beyond normal levels.

"In cases like this, we defer to the recommendation of the experts to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our constituents," Binay said. The school, located at the corner of P. Binay and Borneo Streets, has 1,200 students.

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4R (P12)

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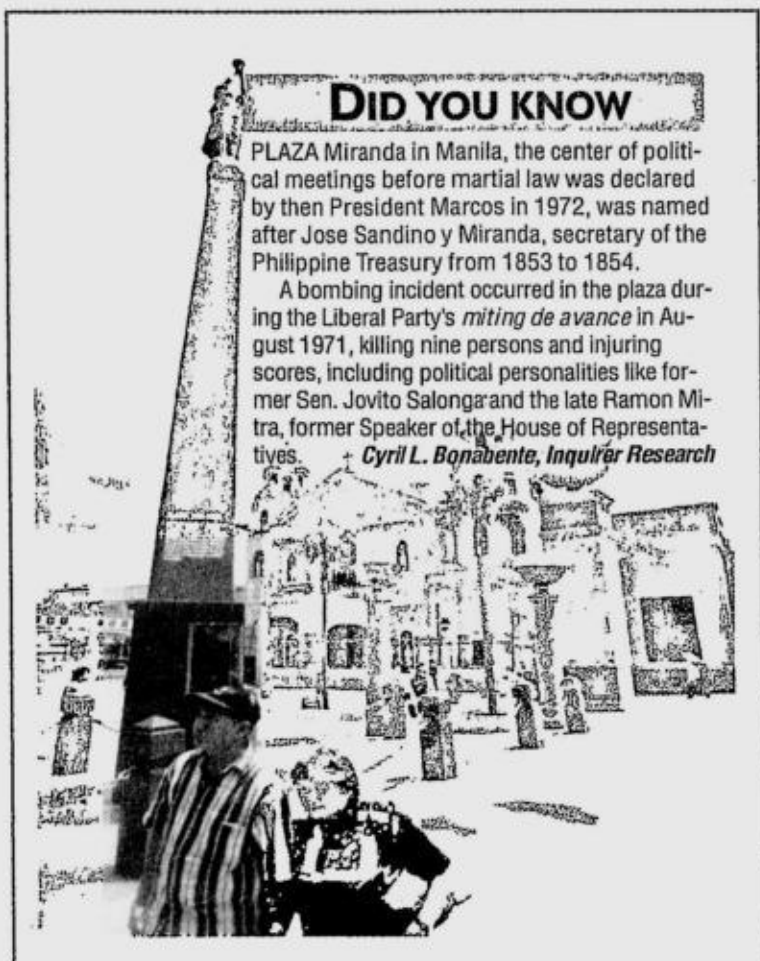
CP720 1.5-inch LCD

DID YOU KNOW

PLAZA Miranda in Manila, the center of political meetings before martial law was declared by then President Marcos in 1972, was named after Jose Sandino y Miranda, secretary of the Philippine Treasury from 1853 to 1854.

A bombing incident occurred in the plaza during the Liberal Party's *miting de avance* in August 1971, killing nine persons and injuring scores, including political personalities like former Sen. Jovito Salongora and the late Ramon Mitra, former Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research



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Manila judge sends woman recruiter to jail for life

By Tina G. Santos

A JUDGE SENTENCED A WOMAN TO LIFE imprisonment yesterday after he found her guilty of recruiting people for nonexistent jobs abroad.

Judge Silvino Pampilo Jr. of the Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 26 also ordered Elizabeth Reyes to serve 43 more years in jail for estafa.

In addition, Reyes was ordered to pay a fine of P500,000 and to return the money she took from her victims.

Hunt on

Pampilo further ordered the issuance of an arrest warrant for Reyes' co-accused, Nenita Gestopa, who had gone into hiding.

Reyes was arrested by policemen in 2003 following complaints from several job seekers

who accused her of luring them into paying thousands of pesos to land jobs in New Zealand.

But even after paying the placement fees, the victims said that nothing came out of the suspect's promises.

No authority

Based on a certification issued by the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency, it was found out that Reyes was not licensed or authorized to recruit workers for overseas employment.

In her defense, Reyes denied the accusations against her, saying she was also working for Gestopa.

However, the court gave credence to the victims' "straightforward, credible and convincing testimonies," saying they showed no ill motive in testifying against the accused.

METROBRIEFS

Fire hits Malay house

FIRE hit a residential compound in Quezon City owned by the family of retired journalism professor Carolina Malay, leaving a person hurt and destroying P5 million worth of property early yesterday. Arson investigators said the fire originated from a room on the second floor of the Malay ancestral house at 15 General de Jesus St., Heroes Hill, Barangay Sta Cruz. It started at 1:55 a.m. and quickly spread to two other houses, but it spared the building where Malay and her husband, Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo, live. Richard Kho, a family member, sustained minor injuries, according to a report by SF02 Virgilio Agapao. The cause of the blaze is still under investigation, but initial reports indicated it might have been sparked by an electrical short circuit, officials said. The fire was put out at 3:25 a.m.

DJ Yap

Thieves strike thrice

A GASOLINE station, a house and an emission testing office in Pasig City lost more than a million pesos in cash and valuables to robbers in separate incidents. Police said a robber barged inside the office of the Flying V Gasoline Station in Barangay San Miguel on Monday noon. PO3 Enrique Jimenez said the man pulled out a gun, declared a holdup and fled with P467,770 in cash. That same day, Estela Encarnacion, a businesswoman in Barangay Sta. Lucia, lost more than P500,000 worth of jewelry and other valuables to her housemaid Joan Colon, 24. The supervisor of Enuro Test Inc. an emission testing center, also went to the police yesterday to report that thieves broke into their branch in Barangay Bambang and took off with several pieces of office equipment.

Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

Job fair on Dec. 8

A JOB fair will be held for Manila residents on Dec. 8 at City Hall from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Vice Mayor Danny Lacuna said that among the companies which will participate in the fair are Jollibee Food Corp., Kenny Rogers, Greenwich, and Tropical Food Marketing. Firms offering jobs overseas will also be joining the event. Applicants should bring a valid identification card to prove that they are residents of Manila. For more information, call Vivien Misajon at 5273789.

Villamor HS reunion

MEMBERS of Villamor High School Batch '68 will hold a reunion on Dec. 9 at the multi-purpose hall of South Star Plaza Hotel (formerly Tradewinds Hotel) on South Superhighway, Makati City. For details, call up 0917-6179806, 0926-6980333 and 7577652.

12-hour fire destroys warehouse in Pasig City

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

FOR MORE THAN TWELVE HOURS early yesterday morning, firemen were kept busy trying to put out a big fire that broke out inside a warehouse full of rolls of cotton in Pasig City.

The fire had already razed more than P40 million worth of raw materials as firemen tirelessly worked to put the fire under control until the afternoon, FO1 Salvador Norberte told the INQUIRER.

He said the fire was reported by a watchman at the compound who saw thick smoke coming out of the warehouse on Amang Rodriguez Avenue in Barangay Rosario at 2:25 a.m.

The warehouse, owned by textile company Litton Mills, had stopped operating two weeks ago allegedly because of financial problems, Pasig fire chief Ricardo Perdigon told the INQUIRER.

Responding firefighters had a difficult time controlling the fire, which quickly spread to the rolls of cotton

kept inside the warehouse.

The firemen worked hard to contain the fire to prevent it from spreading to an adjacent warehouse full of sewing machines and other equipment used to make denim pants.

The burning warehouse was separated from the second building by a massive concrete wall, but firefighters were concerned that the flames would reach the wooden ceiling of the adjacent warehouse, Norberte said.

At noon yesterday, the fire had already razed the burning warehouse to the ground, but the rolls of cotton inside were still burning.

Perdigon said it would probably take them until this morning to completely put out the fire.

Twelve fire trucks of the Pasig City Fire Station had been deployed to the compound, taking turns in refilling their water tanks as the operation dragged on.

They were backed up by more than 10 volunteer fire trucks, Perdigon added.

Herbs, drugs inducing abortion banned in Quiapo

By Tina G. Santos

THE MANILA GOVERNMENT HAS ordered a citywide crackdown against the sale of drugs and herbs used to induce abortion.

Mayor Lito Atienza also banned the sale of herbs in Quiapo after agents of the National Bureau of Investigation last arrested sidewalk vendors in the area who were allegedly selling Cytotec pills. The drug, which has been banned by the Bureau of Food and Drugs, is usually taken to treat ulcer. But it can also cause miscarriages in pregnant women.

Atienza, chair of Pro-Life Philippines, said he had earlier forged an agreement with vendors in Quiapo that they would not sell herbs or drugs that could lead to an abortion.

He had also advised them to police their ranks to make sure the agreement would be strictly implemented.

However, operatives of the NBI Field Operations Division apprehended six herbal traders allegedly selling Cytotec pills during an operation in Quiapo last Wednesday.

The suspects were identified as Florenda Ledda, Tessie Agan, Ronaldo Angeles, Orlando Atchico, Gina Atchico and Emiliana Tolentino. Seized from them were 79 pills worth P7,000. According to the NBI, the suspects were selling the pills for P60 to P100 each.

NBI Field Operations Division chief Roland Argabioso, whose unit had spearheaded the operation, said earlier that the suspects would be charged with violating Republic Act 3720 or the Food, Drugs and Cosmetics Act as amended by Executive Order No. 175. The offense carries a jail term ranging from one to five years and a fine of P5,000 to P10,000.

"We have received information that a single supplier could dispose of at least 50 boxes of Cytotec per day," Argabioso said, adding that each box contained 56 tablets.

The NBI official said that the vendors' customers, mostly students with ages ranging from 17 to 28, would usually buy a set of six pills at a time to induce an abortion.

PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION

PhilHealth Regional Office - XI
R.C. Reyes Bldg., Quimpo Blvd., Davao City
Tel. Nos.: 298-3000 to 3004 • Telefax: (082) 296-2265
www.philhealth.gov.ph

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation, PhilHealth Regional Office XI - Davao (PROXI-Davao) wishes to invite supplier to apply for eligibility and to bid for the Procurement of Twenty three units Desktop Computers with UPS and Eight units Network Laserjet Printers (see attached project specifications).

The Government of the Philippines, through PhilHealth has provided funds for which this invitation is issued. The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) of the following lots to be bid are:

LOT	IT EQUIPMENTS	QUANTITY (Units)	UNIT PRICE (Pesos)	ABC (Pesos)
Lot 1	Desktop Computers with UPS	23	60,000.00	1,380,000.00
Lot 2	Network Printer (Laserjet)	8	95,000.00	760,000.00

All interested parties are invited for the Pre-Bid Conference at the PhilHealth Regional Office XI-Davao Conference Room, Reyes Building, Quimpo Blvd., Matina, Davao City on December 20, 2006 at 9:00 a.m.

The bid documents shall be available at the General Services Section, Administration Division through Mr. Patrick Angelo L. Uy, Chairperson, PRO XI BAC Secretariat, starting December 6, 2006 to January 8, 2007, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. upon payment of non-refundable fee of:

LOT	IT EQUIPMENTS	FEE (Pesos)
Lot 1	Desktop Computers with UPS	2,760.00
Lot 2	Network Printers (Laserjet)	1,520.00

The bidders shall drop their duly accomplished bid documents (1) eligibility requirements, (2) technical proposal, and (3) financial proposal in three separate sealed envelopes in the bid boxes located at the Administration Division, PhilHealth Regional Office XI - Davao, Reyes Bldg., Quimpo Boulevard, Matina, Davao City. Deadline for submission and receipt of bids shall be on January 10, 2007 at 11:00 a.m. The official time clock shall be the bundy clock located at the ground floor. Any bid submitted after the cut-off time will not be accepted. Opening of bids will follow at 1:00 p.m. at the same venue. Any bidder who comes late will not be entertained.

The BAC shall determine if each prospective bidder is eligible to participate in the bidding by examining the completeness of each prospective bidder's eligibility requirements or statements against a checklist of requirements, using the non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria.

The Bid Security shall be in an amount at least equal to, and not lower than a percentage of the approved budget for the contract in the following forms:

LOT 1: PROCUREMENT OF 23 UNITS DESKTOP COMPUTERS WITH UPS

Forms of Security	Minimum Amount in % of Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid	Amount of Bid Security
Cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit	One percent (1%)	PhP 13,800.00
Bank Guarantee	One & a half percent (1 1/2%)	PhP 20,700.00

LOT 2: PROCUREMENT OF 8 UNITS NETWORK PRINTERS (LASERJET)

Forms of Security	Minimum Amount in % of Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid	Amount of Bid Security
Cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit	One percent (1%)	PhP 7,600.00
Bank Guarantee	One & a half percent (1 1/2%)	PhP 11,400.00

PhilHealth Regional Office XI Bids and Awards Committee (PRO XI BAC) reserves the right to waive any formality in the responses to the eligibility requirements and to this invitation. PRO XI BAC further reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, or declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered as a result of this invitation.

For more information, please call the BAC Secretariat at telephone nos.: (082) 296-2265, (082) 299-2075 and (082) 299-3731.

We look forward to your participation in this worthwhile endeavor.

(Sgd.) RAUL M. ODUCAZEN
Chairperson, PRO XI-Davao, BAC

(PDI-Dec. 6 & 13, 2006)

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WATAPALYERNA 9 PM
KALADO 10 PM

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Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5	Nickelodeon	Kapamilya Cinema	Las Vegas (Season 2)	The Shield 4	Inocente De Ti	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Best The Vandal	Pangako Sa 'Yo	TV Patrol World	Kapamilya Deal Of No Deal	Sugar Lips (8:15 PM)	Ultimate Ultimate World	World's Most Amazing Videos	NBA Live	NBA Fantasy Hoops	The Simpsons	Angela's Ashes	Shamen King
ABS-CBN 2	Nickelodeon	Kapamilya Cinema	Las Vegas (Season 2)	The Shield 4	Inocente De Ti	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Best The Vandal	Pangako Sa 'Yo	TV Patrol World	Kapamilya Deal Of No Deal	Sugar Lips (8:15 PM)	Ultimate Ultimate World	World's Most Amazing Videos	NBA Live	NBA Fantasy Hoops	The Simpsons	Angela's Ashes	Shamen King
AXN	Nickelodeon	Kapamilya Cinema	Las Vegas (Season 2)	The Shield 4	Inocente De Ti	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Best The Vandal	Pangako Sa 'Yo	TV Patrol World	Kapamilya Deal Of No Deal	Sugar Lips (8:15 PM)	Ultimate Ultimate World	World's Most Amazing Videos	NBA Live	NBA Fantasy Hoops	The Simpsons	Angela's Ashes	Shamen King
Cartoon Network	Nickelodeon	Kapamilya Cinema	Las Vegas (Season 2)	The Shield 4	Inocente De Ti	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Best The Vandal	Pangako Sa 'Yo	TV Patrol World	Kapamilya Deal Of No Deal	Sugar Lips (8:15 PM)	Ultimate Ultimate World	World's Most Amazing Videos	NBA Live	NBA Fantasy Hoops	The Simpsons	Angela's Ashes	Shamen King
Cinema One	Nickelodeon	Kapamilya Cinema	Las Vegas (Season 2)	The Shield 4	Inocente De Ti	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Best The Vandal	Pangako Sa 'Yo	TV Patrol World	Kapamilya Deal Of No Deal	Sugar Lips (8:15 PM)	Ultimate Ultimate World	World's Most Amazing Videos	NBA Live	NBA Fantasy Hoops	The Simpsons	Angela's Ashes	Shamen King
Cinemax	Nickelodeon	Kapamilya Cinema	Las Vegas (Season 2)	The Shield 4	Inocente De Ti	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Best The Vandal	Pangako Sa 'Yo	TV Patrol World	Kapamilya Deal Of No Deal	Sugar Lips (8:15 PM)	Ultimate Ultimate World	World's Most Amazing Videos	NBA Live	NBA Fantasy Hoops	The Simpsons	Angela's Ashes	Shamen King
CNN	Nickelodeon	Kapamilya Cinema	Las Vegas (Season 2)	The Shield 4	Inocente De Ti	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Best The Vandal	Pangako Sa 'Yo	TV Patrol World	Kapamilya Deal Of No Deal	Sugar Lips (8:15 PM)	Ultimate Ultimate World	World's Most Amazing Videos	NBA Live	NBA Fantasy Hoops	The Simpsons	Angela's Ashes	Shamen King
Crim/Suspense	Nickelodeon	Kapamilya Cinema	Las Vegas (Season 2)	The Shield 4	Inocente De Ti	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Best The Vandal	Pangako Sa 'Yo	TV Patrol World	Kapamilya Deal Of No Deal	Sugar Lips (8:15 PM)	Ultimate Ultimate World	World's Most Amazing Videos	NBA Live	NBA Fantasy Hoops	The Simpsons	Angela's Ashes	Shamen King
Discovery Channel	Nickelodeon	Kapamilya Cinema	Las Vegas (Season 2)	The Shield 4	Inocente De Ti	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Best The Vandal	Pangako Sa 'Yo	TV Patrol World	Kapamilya Deal Of No Deal	Sugar Lips (8:15 PM)	Ultimate Ultimate World	World's Most Amazing Videos	NBA Live	NBA Fantasy Hoops	The Simpsons	Angela's Ashes	Shamen King
ESPN	Nickelodeon	Kapamilya Cinema	Las Vegas (Season 2)	The Shield 4	Inocente De Ti	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Best The Vandal	Pangako Sa 'Yo	TV Patrol World	Kapamilya Deal Of No Deal	Sugar Lips (8:15 PM)	Ultimate Ultimate World	World's Most Amazing Videos	NBA Live	NBA Fantasy Hoops	The Simpsons	Angela's Ashes	Shamen King
ETC	Nickelodeon	Kapamilya Cinema	Las Vegas (Season 2)	The Shield 4	Inocente De Ti	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Best The Vandal	Pangako Sa 'Yo	TV Patrol World	Kapamilya Deal Of No Deal	Sugar Lips (8:15 PM)	Ultimate Ultimate World	World's Most Amazing Videos	NBA Live	NBA Fantasy Hoops	The Simpsons	Angela's Ashes	Shamen King
ETC 2nd Avenue	Nickelodeon	Kapamilya Cinema	Las Vegas (Season 2)	The Shield 4	Inocente De Ti	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Best The Vandal	Pangako Sa 'Yo	TV Patrol World	Kapamilya Deal Of No Deal	Sugar Lips (8:15 PM)	Ultimate Ultimate World	World's Most Amazing Videos	NBA Live	NBA Fantasy Hoops	The Simpsons	Angela's Ashes	Shamen King
Fox News	Nickelodeon	Kapamilya Cinema	Las Vegas (Season 2)	The Shield 4	Inocente De Ti	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Best The Vandal	Pangako Sa 'Yo	TV Patrol World	Kapamilya Deal Of No Deal	Sugar Lips (8:15 PM)	Ultimate Ultimate World	World's Most Amazing Videos	NBA Live	NBA Fantasy Hoops	The Simpsons	Angela's Ashes	Shamen King
GMA 7	Nickelodeon	Kapamilya Cinema	Las Vegas (Season 2)	The Shield 4	Inocente De Ti	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Best The Vandal	Pangako Sa 'Yo	TV Patrol World	Kapamilya Deal Of No Deal	Sugar Lips (8:15 PM)	Ultimate Ultimate World	World's Most Amazing Videos	NBA Live	NBA Fantasy Hoops	The Simpsons	Angela's Ashes	Shamen King
Hallmark Channel	Nickelodeon	Kapamilya Cinema	Las Vegas (Season 2)	The Shield 4	Inocente De Ti	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Best The Vandal	Pangako Sa 'Yo	TV Patrol World	Kapamilya Deal Of No Deal	Sugar Lips (8:15 PM)	Ultimate Ultimate World	World's Most Amazing Videos	NBA Live	NBA Fantasy Hoops	The Simpsons	Angela's Ashes	Shamen King
HBO	Nickelodeon	Kapamilya Cinema	Las Vegas (Season 2)	The Shield 4	Inocente De Ti	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Best The Vandal	Pangako Sa 'Yo	TV Patrol World	Kapamilya Deal Of No Deal	Sugar Lips (8:15 PM)	Ultimate Ultimate World	World's Most Amazing Videos	NBA Live	NBA Fantasy Hoops	The Simpsons	Angela's Ashes	Shamen King
Hero TV	Nickelodeon	Kapamilya Cinema	Las Vegas (Season 2)	The Shield 4	Inocente De Ti	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Best The Vandal	Pangako Sa 'Yo	TV Patrol World	Kapamilya Deal Of No Deal	Sugar Lips (8:15 PM)	Ultimate Ultimate World	World's Most Amazing Videos	NBA Live	NBA Fantasy Hoops	The Simpsons	Angela's Ashes	Shamen King
IBC 13	Nickelodeon	Kapamilya Cinema	Las Vegas (Season 2)	The Shield 4	Inocente De Ti	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Best The Vandal	Pangako Sa 'Yo	TV Patrol World	Kapamilya Deal Of No Deal	Sugar Lips (8:15 PM)	Ultimate Ultimate World	World's Most Amazing Videos	NBA Live	NBA Fantasy Hoops	The Simpsons	Angela's Ashes	Shamen King
JackTV	Nickelodeon	Kapamilya Cinema	Las Vegas (Season 2)	The Shield 4	Inocente De Ti	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Best The Vandal	Pangako Sa 'Yo	TV Patrol World	Kapamilya Deal Of No Deal	Sugar Lips (8:15 PM)	Ultimate Ultimate World	World's Most Amazing Videos	NBA Live	NBA Fantasy Hoops	The Simpsons	Angela's Ashes	Shamen King
Lifestyle Network	Nickelodeon	Kapamilya Cinema	Las Vegas (Season 2)	The Shield 4	Inocente De Ti	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Best The Vandal	Pangako Sa 'Yo	TV Patrol World	Kapamilya Deal Of No Deal	Sugar Lips (8:15 PM)	Ultimate Ultimate World	World's Most Amazing Videos	NBA Live	NBA Fantasy Hoops	The Simpsons	Angela's Ashes	Shamen King
MTV Philippines	Nickelodeon	Kapamilya Cinema	Las Vegas (Season 2)	The Shield 4	Inocente De Ti	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Best The Vandal	Pangako Sa 'Yo	TV Patrol World	Kapamilya Deal Of No Deal	Sugar Lips (8:15 PM)	Ultimate Ultimate World	World's Most Amazing Videos	NBA Live	NBA Fantasy Hoops	The Simpsons	Angela's Ashes	Shamen King
MYX	Nickelodeon	Kapamilya Cinema	Las Vegas (Season 2)	The Shield 4	Inocente De Ti	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Best The Vandal	Pangako Sa 'Yo	TV Patrol World	Kapamilya Deal Of No Deal	Sugar Lips (8:15 PM)	Ultimate Ultimate World	World's Most Amazing Videos	NBA Live	NBA Fantasy Hoops	The Simpsons	Angela's Ashes	Shamen King
National Geographic	Nickelodeon	Kapamilya Cinema	Las Vegas (Season 2)	The Shield 4	Inocente De Ti	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Best The Vandal	Pangako Sa 'Yo	TV Patrol World	Kapamilya Deal Of No Deal	Sugar Lips (8:15 PM)	Ultimate Ultimate World	World's Most Amazing Videos	NBA Live	NBA Fantasy Hoops	The Simpsons	Angela's Ashes	Shamen King
NBN	Nickelodeon	Kapamilya Cinema	Las Vegas (Season 2)	The Shield 4	Inocente De Ti	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Best The Vandal	Pangako Sa 'Yo	TV Patrol World	Kapamilya Deal Of No Deal	Sugar Lips (8:15 PM)	Ultimate Ultimate World	World's Most Amazing Videos	NBA Live	NBA Fantasy Hoops	The Simpsons	Angela's Ashes	Shamen King
Nick 25	Nickelodeon	Kapamilya Cinema	Las Vegas (Season 2)	The Shield 4	Inocente De Ti	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Best The Vandal	Pangako Sa 'Yo	TV Patrol World	Kapamilya Deal Of No Deal	Sugar Lips (8:15 PM)	Ultimate Ultimate World	World's Most Amazing Videos	NBA Live	NBA Fantasy Hoops	The Simpsons	Angela's Ashes	Shamen King
Nickelodeon	Nickelodeon	Kapamilya Cinema	Las Vegas (Season 2)	The Shield 4	Inocente De Ti	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Best The Vandal	Pangako Sa 'Yo	TV Patrol World	Kapamilya Deal Of No Deal	Sugar Lips (8:15 PM)	Ultimate Ultimate World	World's Most Amazing Videos	NBA Live	NBA Fantasy Hoops	The Simpsons	Angela's Ashes	Shamen King
PBS	Nickelodeon	Kapamilya Cinema	Las Vegas (Season 2)	The Shield 4	Inocente De Ti	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Best The Vandal	Pangako Sa 'Yo	TV Patrol World	Kapamilya Deal Of No Deal	Sugar Lips (8:15 PM)	Ultimate Ultimate World	World's Most Amazing Videos	NBA Live	NBA Fantasy Hoops	The Simpsons	Angela's Ashes	Shamen King
QTV	Nickelodeon	Kapamilya Cinema	Las Vegas (Season 2)	The Shield 4	Inocente De Ti	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Best The Vandal	Pangako Sa 'Yo	TV Patrol World	Kapamilya Deal Of No Deal	Sugar Lips (8:15 PM)	Ultimate Ultimate World	World's Most Amazing Videos	NBA Live	NBA Fantasy Hoops	The Simpsons	Angela's Ashes	Shamen King
RPN 9	Nickelodeon	Kapamilya Cinema	Las Vegas (Season 2)	The Shield 4	Inocente De Ti	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Best The Vandal	Pangako Sa 'Yo	TV Patrol World	Kapamilya Deal Of No Deal	Sugar Lips (8:15 PM)	Ultimate Ultimate World	World's Most Amazing Videos	NBA Live	NBA Fantasy Hoops	The Simpsons	Angela's Ashes	Shamen King
SBN 21	Nickelodeon	Kapamilya Cinema	Las Vegas (Season 2)	The Shield 4	Inocente De Ti	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Best The Vandal	Pangako Sa 'Yo	TV Patrol World	Kapamilya Deal Of No Deal	Sugar Lips (8:15 PM)	Ultimate Ultimate World	World's Most Amazing Videos	NBA Live	NBA Fantasy Hoops	The Simpsons	Angela's Ashes	Shamen King
Solar Sports	Nickelodeon	Kapamilya Cinema	Las Vegas (Season 2)	The Shield 4	Inocente De Ti	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Best The Vandal	Pangako Sa 'Yo	TV Patrol World	Kapamilya Deal Of No Deal	Sugar Lips (8:15 PM)	Ultimate Ultimate World	World's Most Amazing Videos	NBA Live	NBA Fantasy Hoops	The Simpsons	Angela's Ashes	Shamen King
Star Movies	Nickelodeon	Kapamilya Cinema																



STILL REIGNING AT 79. Thai Buddhist monks walk past a giant portrait of King Bhumibol Adulyadej during ceremonies Tuesday, Dec. 5, in Bangkok, Thailand. King Bhumibol, the world's longest reigning monarch, is celebrating his 79th birthday. AP

World powers set meet on Iran nuclear sanctions

PARIS—SIX WORLD POWERS MEET in Paris on Tuesday to try to agree what sanctions to impose on Iran, for refusing to halt sensitive nuclear activities feared to be part of a drive to build the bomb.

High-ranking diplomats from the five veto-wielding UN Security Council members—Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States—plus Germany will attend the talks Tuesday evening at the French foreign ministry.

A representative of European Union policy chief Javier Solana will also participate in the meeting.

World powers have been trying for weeks to agree on a package of sanctions to impose on Iran for ignoring a UN deadline to stop enriching uranium, which can be used to generate power or to build an atomic bomb.

While all agree on the principle of

sanctions, they disagree on what form these should take, with Russia and to a lesser extent China, which have extensive economic and energy ties with Iran, seeking to limit their scope.

France's Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy said on Monday the talks—which follow several failed attempts to secure a deal on sanctions against Iran—had a strong chance of succeeding.

"I think that we can now reach agreement on the text," he said in Brussels, after talks with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov.

A draft resolution circulated by Britain, France and Germany would have barred trade with Iran in goods related to its nuclear and ballistic missile programs and slapped financial and travel restrictions on persons and agen-

cies involved in either area.

Russia and China have tried to water down the text, saying the sanctions should not target individuals and should be limited in duration, while Washington wants to beef it up.

The United States, and to some extent France, have shown signs of impatience with the reluctance of China and Russia to put the package of sanctions to the vote in the Security Council.

On Thursday, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said Washington may seek to impose a vote in spite of objections from Russia.

A top Russian official was quoted as saying by RIA Novosti news agency Tuesday that Security Council members were moving closer to an accord over the draft resolution, but added that talks were still tough going. AFP

Poisoning death probe continues

LONDON—BRITISH DETECTIVES were in Moscow on Tuesday to continue their investigation into the mysterious poisoning death of former spy Alexander Litvinenko, as diplomatic tensions between Britain and Russia rose closer to the surface.

A spokesperson for the Metropolitan Police confirmed that "a team of officers" had arrived in Moscow, but could not say how many had made the trip, or how long they planned to stay.

While British media have reported that nine detectives went to Moscow, Russian state television RIA-Novosti said that only four arrived, and were met by British embassy officials before leaving in a minivan.

According to The Guardian daily, the officers were to interview the three Russian men who met Litvinenko on Nov. 1, the day he fell ill, about three weeks before he eventually died. They will also interview two men whose names have not yet appeared publicly, the newspaper said.

The trio—businessmen Andrei Lugovoi, Dmitri Kovtun and Vyacheslav Sokolov—have all asserted that they are innocent, and Lugovoi has said that he believes they are being framed. In comments made to The Times, he said he and his two associates were ready to meet with investigators. AFP

Nasa unveils plans to build moon base

WASHINGTON—NASA ANNOUNCED plans on Monday for a permanent base on the moon, to be started soon after astronauts return there around 2020.

The agency's deputy administrator, Shana Dale, said the United States would develop rockets and spacecraft to get people to the moon and establish a rudimentary base. There, other countries and commercial interests could expand the outpost to develop scientific and other interests, she said.

Dale and other Nasa officials said the agency envisioned a base at one of the lunar poles, to take advantage of the near-constant sunlight for solar-power generation, and giving it an "open architecture" design to which others can add the capabilities they want.

Scott Horowitz, Nasa's associate administrator for exploration, said crews of four astronauts would make week-long missions to the moon starting around 2020. As more equipment was set up, human stays would eventually grow to 180 days, and become permanent by 2024. By 2027, officials said, a pressurized roving vehicle on the surface would take people on expeditions far from the base.

Nasa gave no cost estimate

for the program and no design details for a possible moon base. Dale said all plans assumed that the agency would continue operating from a fixed budget of about \$17 billion a year.

The space shuttle fleet is to be retired by 2010, and the United States plans to scale back its involvement in the International Space Station. The station is still under construction, with a mission by the shuttle Discovery to lift off this week. Dale said money would be shifted from the shuttle and the station to the lunar exploration program.

While the Bush administration and Nasa have spoken in general terms about plans for a return to the moon, followed by human spaceflight to Mars, this is the first time officials have proposed a permanent lunar base.

"We're going for a base on the moon," Horowitz said. "It's a very, very big decision."

In a televised news conference from the Johnson Space Center in Houston on the eve of an international conference there on space exploration, Dale said the plan was developed after consultation with space agencies representing 14 countries and more than 1,000 experts in space science and commerce. NYT

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WORLD BRIEFS

Indon solon resigns

JAKARTA—An Indonesian lawmaker has resigned from his party over a sex video showing him cavorting with a singer and now faces a criminal investigation over allegations he forced her to have an abortion, officials said Tuesday. Yahya Zaini was head of Golkar's spiritual affairs committee before the scandal forced him to resign his post in Indonesia's largest political party. He now also faces expulsion from parliament over the sex scandal, which has gripped this conservative nation. "He has resigned yesterday (Monday) and the parliament is now processing his position in the house," Andi Mattalatta, head of the Golkar faction in parliament told AFP. The widely circulated video was apparently shot with a mobile phone in an upmarket hotel. AFP

Pinochet stable

SANTIAGO—Former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet, accused of torture, killings and kidnappings during his 1973-1990 rule, was stable but still seriously ill on Monday following a heart attack over the weekend, doctors said. His daughter said it was "almost a miracle" her 91-year-old father had survived and thanked supporters who have held a vigil outside the military hospital in Santiago where he is being treated. Pinochet, the best known of the strongmen who dominated South American politics in the 1970s and 1980s, was rushed to hospital on Sunday for an angioplasty to reopen his arteries. Doctors said on Monday it was too risky to operate further. Reuters

Helicopter mishap

BAGHDAD—Four American service members were killed when a military helicopter suffered mechanical failures while flying over a lake in Anbar Province in western Iraq and made an emergency landing on the shore, American military officials said Monday. The military said the Marine Corps CH-46 Sea Knight troop transport helicopter, with 16 people aboard, was flying over Lake Qadisiya, near Haditha, on Sunday when it began to experience "mechanical difficulties." The pilots lowered the twin-rotor aircraft in a controlled maneuver and guided it to the water's edge, according to Lt. Col. Josslyn L. Aberle, a military spokesperson in Baghdad. The mechanical failures were not caused by an enemy attack, officials said. New York Times News Service

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Military topples Fiji gov't, ousts PM

SUVA—FIJI'S MILITARY HAS TOPPLED THE government and dismissed elected Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase, commander Voreqe Bainimarama announced Tuesday following a months-long standoff between the two men.

"As of six o'clock this evening, the military has taken over the government, has executive authority and the running of this country," he told a press conference.

"I request you to remain calm and support the (military) in this process of political readjustment to pave the way for a new Fiji," Bainimarama said as the long-feared coup finally became official.

Saying he was acting with "great reluctance," the commander said he was suspending certain provisions

of the constitution, taking on the role of the president and appointing an interim premier and government.

"Having stepped into the shoes of the president, I shall now therefore dismiss the prime minister," he added.

Bainimarama named a doctor with no military background, Jona Baravilala Senilagakali, as caretaker prime minister and said that parliament would be dissolved.

Senilagakali was paraded before

a throng of journalists following the press conference but did not take any questions.

The military commander, who had been warned by regional powers Australia and New Zealand as well as the United Nations of repercussions if he went ahead with a coup, vowed the takeover would not be permanent.

He urged the world not to act hastily, even as New Zealand and Australia said they would slap sanctions on the new regime and as the United Nations warned that Fijian troops could be pulled from overseas peacekeeping missions.

"I plead to the international community to first learn and understand the situation here in Fiji before you take any action," he said.

Bainimarama had repeatedly

challenged Qarase to resign or face a coup, and said he took the action after the premier failed to show up at a meeting with the country's president Tuesday.

President Ratu Josefa Iloilo had earlier Tuesday asked Qarase to resign or agree to Bainimarama's demands. The prime minister's refusal had left Fiji in "limbo," the army chief said.

"This stalemate has forced me to step forward and the military has taken over power," he said.

Despite his action, Bainimarama said the constitution would largely remain in place, and that the judiciary and other arms of government would continue to operate.

He called on Fijians to remain calm and maintain their routines.



FIJIAN soldiers take up positions outside Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase's residence in the nation's capital Suva Dec. 5.

REUTERS

3 car bombs, gunmen kill 30 people in Iraq

BAGHDAD—GUNMEN AND bombers killed 30 people in Baghdad on Tuesday, including 14 Shiite religious workers after a powerful Iraqi Shiite leader urged President George Bush to strike harder at Sunni rebels to avert civil war.

Gunmen killed the 14 employees of a Shiite religious foundation in the capital, while officials said three car bombs killed 16 people and wounded 25 in a separate attack near a fuel station in a religiously mixed area in southern Baghdad.

The civilian employees for the Shiite Endowment, a foundation that oversees religious sites and mosques, were killed when their

bus was ambushed, Salah Abdul Razzaq, a spokesperson for the organization told Reuters.

Razzaq said 14 employees were killed and eight wounded when gunmen forced the bus to stop on a highway in Qahira district.

Interior Ministry sources said gunmen first set off a car bomb and then sprayed the bus with bullets. The sources put the toll at 15 employees dead and seven wounded.

The attack came a day after Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, a cleric and head of the biggest party in Iraq's government, SCIRI, met Bush in Washington as Iraqi and US officials struggle to contain violence pitching the country toward all-out civil war.

Reuters

Controversial US envoy to the UN resigns

WASHINGTON—PRESIDENT Bush reluctantly accepted the resignation of the UN Ambassador, John R. Bolton, on Monday, conceding that the envoy could not win Senate confirmation and signaling that the administration is unwilling to make another end-run around congressional opponents in order to keep Bolton in his job.

Ending more than a year of controversy surrounding the blunt-spoken ambassador, Bush issued a strongly worded statement excoriating Bolton's opponents on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for refusing to send his nomination to the Senate floor for a vote.

"They chose to obstruct his confirmation, even though he enjoys majority support in the Senate, and even though their tactics will



BOLTON

AP

disrupt our diplomatic work at a sensitive and important time," Bush said. "This stubborn obstructionism ill serves our country, and discourages men and women of talent from serving their nation."

Bush went on to praise Bolton, a

fiery conservative and longtime critic of the United Nations, thanking him for his "advocacy of human rights and human dignity."

Despite the president's strong words, administration officials had largely given up on Bolton's confirmation last month, after Sen. Lincoln Chafee, R-R.I., and a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, said he would not support it.

It was not immediately clear who would replace Bolton. The leading candidate appeared to be the American ambassador to Iraq, Zalmay Khalilzad, who has told colleagues he is ready to leave Baghdad. Others said to be in the running are Richard S. Williamson, former ambassador to the UN Commission on Human Rights, Sen. Mike DeWine, the Ohio Republican who lost his re-

election bid, and R. Nicholas Burns, the undersecretary of state for political affairs.

Bolton's decision to step down brings to an end the stormy and controversial tenure of an ambassador whose confrontational style often conflicted with the understated ways of the United Nations.

To his critics, he was an abrasive proponent of a hard-line, conservative ideology at odds with the multilateral approach at the United Nations. But his supporters pointed to numerous successes: several Security Council resolutions, including measures seeking to slow or halt the nuclear ambitions of Iran and North Korea and another ending the war in Lebanon and establishing a UN peacekeeping force there.

New York Times News Service

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RP pugs' perfect start gives glimmer of hope

By Ted S. Melendres, Sports Editor

DOHA, QATAR—FOR EIGHT tense seconds on Sunday night, the Philippines' enviable record of six straight match wins in the boxing ring looked to have ended there.

Lightweight Gilbert Basadre, stunned, thumped his chest with both gloves, then fixed his head gear, refusing to look at his rattled corner.

He had just absorbed a thundering left hook in the right side of the face from the favored Pakistani, Ali Shah, the 2002 Busan Asian Games light welterweight silver medalist.

As the Malaysian referee gave the 22-year-old Basadre an eight count, RP coach Patricio Gaspi yelled instructions: "Bawian mo agad, wag mo hayaan makaisa (Get back at him, don't let him get away with it)."

After evening up matters in the first two rounds, 10-10, Basadre lost the third, 6-3. But he regained focus in the one-minute interval after the third and charged up with a variety of punches in the final round.

Basadre capped three straight points late in the fight with a left hook that backed up the shorter but more experienced Shah, 20-17, and then used the clock to preserve a slim 20-19 victory at the 15th Asian Games here.

"That was close," Basadre said in Filipino after the fight. "[Shah] was good and tough and I had to step up in the fourth round. I fol-

lowed my coach's instructions, that's why I got the points."

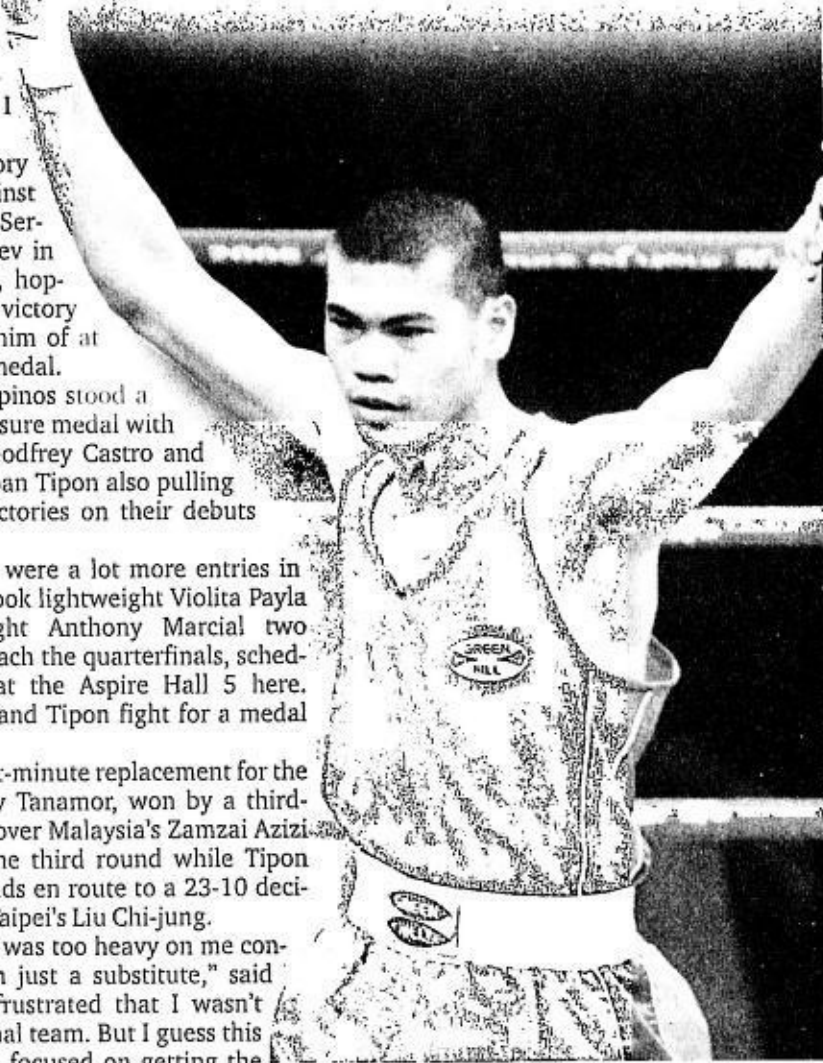
Basadre's victory set him up against Turkmenistan's Serdar Hidayberdiyev in the quarterfinals, hoping for a second victory that will assure him of at least the bronze medal.

In all, five Filipinos stood a win away from a sure medal with light flyweight Godfrey Castro and bantamweight Joan Tipon also pulling off handsome victories on their debuts Sunday night.

Because there were a lot more entries in their classes, it took lightweight Violita Payla and featherweight Anthony Marcial two match wins to reach the quarterfinals, scheduled Thursday at the Aspire Hall 5 here. Basadre, Castro and Tipon fight for a medal Friday.

Castro, the last-minute replacement for the suspended Harry Tanamor, won by a third-round stoppage over Malaysia's Zamzai Azizi 12 seconds in the third round while Tipon took all the rounds en route to a 23-10 decision of Chinese Taipei's Liu Chi-jung.

"The pressure was too heavy on me considering that I'm just a substitute," said Castro. "I was frustrated that I wasn't part of the original team. But I guess this is my break. I'm focused on getting the gold."



ANTHONY Marcial: A win away from medal. LYN RILLON

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China	38	20	11	69	Saudi Arabia	1	0	0	1
Japan	12	15	19	46	Syria	1	0	0	1
South Korea	7	12	21	40	Vietnam	0	3	2	5
Kazakhstan	5	3	6	14	Iran	0	3	0	3
Thailand	2	4	2	8	Taiwan	0	1	4	5
Mongolia	2	2	1	5	Qatar	0	1	2	3
Kuwait	2	0	1	3	Myanmar	0	1	1	2
North Korea	1	3	6	10	UAE	0	1	1	2
India	1	3	2	6	Turkmenistan	0	1	0	1
Singapore	1	2	2	5	Uzbekistan	0	0	4	4
Indonesia	1	1	1	3	Iraq	0	0	0	1
Malaysia	1	1	1	3	Tajikistan	0	0	0	1
Hong Kong	1	0	3	4	Lebanon	0	0	1	1

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15TH ASIAN GAMES
DOHA 2006RP Sked
Dec. 6

Badminton (Aspire) 9 a.m. — Kennevic Asuncion/Kennie Asuncion vs Koo Kien Keat/Quay Swee Ling (Malaysia)

Baseball (Al Ryaan) 9 a.m.—RP vs Thailand

Chess (Al-Dana indoor hall) 3 p.m.—Round 1 team event (Ronald Dableo, Darwin Laylo, Jedara Docena)

Boxing (Aspire) 2 p.m.—Frances Joven vs Angkhan Chomphu-phuang (Thailand)

Rowing (West Bay lagoon) Men's double sculls

Shooting (Lusail shooting range) 8 a.m.—Men's 25-meter rapid fire pistol (Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla)

Swimming (Hamad Aqua Center) 10 a.m.—(heats), 6 p.m. (finals) Women's 100-meter freestyle (Erica Totten) Men's 100-meter freestyle (Kendrick Uy) Women's 200-meter breaststroke (Denjylie Cordero) Men's 200-meter individual medley (Miguel Molina) Women's 800-meter freestyle (Marichi Gandionco)

Tennis (Khalifa) Semifinals men's and women's team events

Weightlifting (Al Dana Banquet Hall) 4 p.m.—Men's 105 kg (Renante Briones)

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BIBOY Rivera: Their best wasn't enough.

LYN RILLON

Asuncion siblings take on Malaysian tandem

By Ted S. Melendres

DOHA, QATAR—BADMINTON SIBLINGS Kennevic and Kennie Asuncion try to validate their world ranking today when they take on a dangerous Malaysian pair in the mixed doubles play in the 15th Asian Games here.

The Asuncions, ranked 22nd in the world and the only Filipino shuttlers in the competition, set out as the underdogs against Koo Kien Keat and Quay Swee Ling, both part of the team that reached the Thomas and Uber Cup semifinals in Japan this year.

Koo and Quay, however, have not paired as a team before the Asiad and are expected to be kept guessing by the debuting Asuncions in their morning match. The Malaysians are also entered in the tough singles battles.

Koo is the other half of the men's tandem that finished third in the 2006 World Championships while Quay reached the finals of this year's New Zealand Open in women's doubles.

Weightlifting

Renante Briones opens his bid in the men's 105-kilogram class of weightlifting at the Khalifa sports complex, motivated by the opportunity to break the national records in a competition dominated so far by Chinese and Iranian lifters.

Perennial national shooting champion Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla will be the earliest bird among the Filipinos at the competition venues as he competes in the men's rapid fire pistol event at 8 a.m. at the Lusail Shooting Range.

Padilla, the seven-time Asiad campaigner whose best finish in the event was fourth in the 1990 Beijing Asiad, is expected to advance to the medal phase of the event, according to Philippine National Shooting Association head Art Macapagal.

Shut out of the medals in a tournament that featured 17 grandmasters in the men's Rapid Swiss, GM-candidate

Ronald Dableo and International Master Darwin Laylo team up with 14-year-old Jodera Docena in the first round of the team event at the Al-Dana Indoor Hall.

Laylo settled for a nine-way tie for sixth place with 5.5 points, 1.5 behind gold medalist Murtas Kazhgaleyev of Kazakhstan, in the nine-round competition. He lost only once—to Uzbek GM Rustam Kasimdzhanov in the eight round—but took the scalp of GMs Talib Moosa Ibrahim of United Arab Emirates and Reefat Bin Sattar of Bangladesh and drew with four other GMs.

Dableo was among the three 5-pointers in men's play while Docena, the prized find from Antequera, Bohol, wound up with 4.5 points in her section won by India's full-pledged GM Humpy Koneru.

The boxing squad sends another fighter into the ring as welterweight Frances Joven clashes with Angkhan Chomphuphuang of Laos at the Aspire Boxing Hall. The Filipinos have recorded six straight match wins in five divisions going into last night's fights. All five (see related story) stood a win away of clinching at least a bronze medal.

Double sculls

Veterans Benjie Tolentino and Jose Rodriguez return as a pair to the West Bay Lagoon anew to fight for a berth in the finals of the men's double sculls. The Filipinos will go up against teams from Japan, Chinese Taipei and Hong Kong.

Miguel Molina leads five Filipinos vying in the heats of five

events in the pool of the Hamad Aquatic Center starting at 10 a.m.

Erica Totten plunges into action in the 100-meter freestyle, Kendrick Uy in the men's race, Denylie Cordero in the women's 200m breaststroke, Molina in the 200m individual medley and Marichi Gandionco in the 800m freestyle.

Molina, the brightest Filipino hope for a medal in the tough competitions that have been dominated by world powers China and Japan, settled for fourth place—the best Filipino finish in the pool so far—in the 400m IM on Saturday.

"I'll do my best again, that's all I can promise," said Molina, one of the three most bemedaled Filipinos in last year's Southeast Asian Games in Manila with three gold medals.

The other triple gold medalists were Tolentino and diver Shiela Mae Perez, who makes her debut on Dec. 10 in the 10m springboard event.



KENNEVIC and Kennie Asuncion: Family affair

A medal that got away from Pinoys

By Ted S. Melendres

DOHA, QATAR—IT WAS A MEDAL THAT got away.

Philippine team officials could not believe their eyes when the scores after the first block of the men's doubles in tenpin bowling were updated on computer screens at the 15th Asian Games here Monday night.

Markwin Tee and Tyrone Ongpauco, originally in third spot behind the co-leading pairs from the United Arab Emirates and Qatar with 2742 pinfalls, vaulted into the lead after Ongpauco's second-game score of 189 was revised to 249.

Filipino media men rushed to the Qatar Bowling Center venue and delegation officials burned the lines to Steve Hontiveros, the president of the Philippine Bowling Congress, who was watching the competitions.

The Philippines' first medal of the Games was within reach. Or so it seemed.



Sonjed Kusonphitak's 1493—vaulted him from 34th to seventh in the all-events.

Later in the night, Marianne Daisy Posadas and Liza Clutario scored 2568 pinfalls and wound up sixth, the best finish among the three RP pairs, in the ladies doubles won by Michelle Kwang Tien Mei and Valerie Teo Hui Ying (2671).

South Korea's Choi Jin-a and Kim Yeau-jin took the silver with 2620, with the Japanese duo of Maki Nakano and Kanako Ishimine clinching the bronze with 2598.

Liza del Rosario and Jojo Canare settled for 10th place (2527) and Irene Garcia Benitez and Cecilia Yap finished in 24th place in the 37-tandem field with 2274.

World champions

The highly touted Filipinos have failed to land a medal in all four events disputed so far in the sport. They go up against rosters teeming with reigning and former world champions again today in the men's and women's trios.

Tee, the Manila Southeast Asian Games masters gold medalist but a first-timer in the Asiad, added an eye-popping six-game series of 1468—the best so far in the competition—to Ongpauco's 1274 for a 2742 total as the Filipinos wound up behind pairs from the United Arab Emirates and Qatar which tied for the gold.

And as the highly touted RP bowlers managed to regain their focus after a listless performance in the singles on Saturday, the boxers made it an enviable four-of-four with the stirring debuts of light flyweight Godfrey Castro and bantamweight Joan Tipon.

Tee opened with a 205 before stringing up games of 258-247-245 and 224. The 22-year-old businessman from San Juan clinched the silver for his pair with a fabulous 289 in the sixth game. He normed 244.7.

Ongpauco dipped below 200 just once—189 in the second game—but finished strongly with a 234. He rolled other games of 204, 204, 242 and 201.

Diving drive plunges as Perez gets injured

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE COUNTRY'S ASIAN GAMES HOPES in diving just took a plunge.

This after aquatics officials yesterday confirmed reports of injury to top diver Shiela Mae Perez, two days before she and the diving team fly to Doha for the competitions.

Perez, the 2005 Southeast Asian Games triple gold winner, is suffering from scar tissue in her mid-back "that is affecting her range of motion," according to Philippine Amateur Swimming Association president Mark Joseph.

However, Joseph, who went ahead to Doha along with the national swimmers, remained confident the 20-year-old Perez can still make it since two doctors will be working on her.

The decision whether Perez would compete, according to Joseph, will be made when the team arrives in Qatar, where Dr. Alex Pine-da and Dr. Martin Camara will look on her condition.

Joseph said the doctors will apply the Graston Technique, which is a form of soft tissue mobilization designed to break down the scar tissue as well as stretch connective tissue fibers.



SHEILA Mae Perez: Doubtful campaigner

The procedure, added Joseph, will take 2-3 days because bone or nerve damage has been ruled out.

Perez sustained the injury while competing in China a few months ago although she continued training in Laguna after that.

Her stint in Doha is highly counted upon to boost the country's lagging campaign in Qatar.

"I also know Shiela is determined to dive for country come what may," added Joseph. "This girl is very dedicated and disciplined."

Tennis field toughest ever

By Ted S. Melendres

DOHA, QATAR—WITH FORMER WORLD No. 9 Paradorn Srichapan, top Asian player Lee Hyung-taik and the multiple Wimbledon doubles champions Leander Paes and Mahesh Bhupathi on the roster of entries, the Doha Asian Games tennis competition is probably the toughest in Asiad history.

"Every match involving the world-ranked players is highly anticipated," said Abouh Mohamed Al-Saidd, a Kuwaiti TV reporter who went to see his countrymen bow to the Philippines, 1-2, in the qualifying round of the men's team event on Monday at the Khalifa Tennis and Squash Complex here.

"The Philippines has exciting players like (Cecil) Mamiit and (Eric) Taino but they are not as competitive as Paradorn, Lee and the Indians at the moment," added Al-Saidd, a jeweler back in Kuwait City. "But they have a chance if Mamiit plays well."

Mamiit dropped his match against Mohammed Ghareeb, 5-7, 6-7, but not before fellow Fil-American Taino nailed the first

point for the RP squad with a 6-3, 3-6, 2-6 win over Abdullah Maqdas.

Mamiit paired with Taino, in favor of Patrick John Tierro, to show the door to Ghareeb and Maqdas in the doubles, 6-2, 6-2, in 51 minutes.

"I was up and down today, but it was mostly bad," said Taino after his 1 hour 38 minute match. "This match was the toughest because it was my first, but I hope to play better next time."

The win earned for the Filipinos a tough quarterfinal encounter with No. 2 seed Chinese Taipei, which stunned the Indians, 2-1, with the victory of Wang Yeu-tzuoo and Lu Yen-hsun over the Paes-Bhupathi pair in the deciding doubles.

Maqdas was inconsolable after the RP win. "I'm disappointed because I was so close to winning [against Taino]," he rued. My loss made it difficult for my team to win the tie. I just did not take my chances."

The top-seeded Thailand rested Paradorn, who's nursing a bad wrist, but still beat Sri Lanka, 2-1, on victories by world-ranked Danai Udomchoke and his doubles pairing with Sonchat Ratiwatana.



FREDERICK Taino returns a shot to Abdullah Maqdas of Kuwait.

Ramirez still upbeat on RP

By June Navarro

CHEF DE MISSION WILLIAM "BUTCH" Ramirez remains upbeat on the chances of the Philippine delegation despite a medal-less campaign five days into the 15th Asian Games in Doha, Qatar.

The Philippine Sports Commission chair believes the RP contingent is still on track to meet its target of five gold medals regardless of the failures from judo, gymnastics, baseball, cycling, swimming, shooting, table tennis and weightlifting.

"There's still so much confidence in the air among our athletes and coaches despite those setbacks," said Ramirez in an overseas phone interview.

Coming out empty-handed, the 10-man judo team will fly out of the oil-rich Gulf nation today while athletes and officials from weightlifting, cycling and gymnastics are set to arrive home by Friday.

"It's quite understandable why we haven't won a medal yet. The level of competition is high," said Ramirez, who is nursing a runny nose due to the cold weather.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2006

Guiao, Lim fined; Tigers meet Aces

By Musong R. Castillo

RED BULL COACH YENG GUIAO and Talk 'N Text team manager Frankie Lim are facing fines of not less than P50,000 each and two-game suspensions for a mid-court altercation that took place Thursday night in a Philippine Cup road game in Tacloban.

PBA Commissioner Noli Eala is throwing the book at the two firebrand personalities for a fisticuffs that never took place, while also set to levy fines amounting to close to P500,000 on players from both teams who left their benches.

The amounts in penalties and possible suspensions are unprecedented, as the league has never before canned anyone that much and that stiff for verbal abuse.

"There was no fight," Guiao told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview last night. "I never threw a punch, what I did was disengage myself from him (Lim) because his face was almost touching mine. Their (commissioner's office) findings are inaccurate."

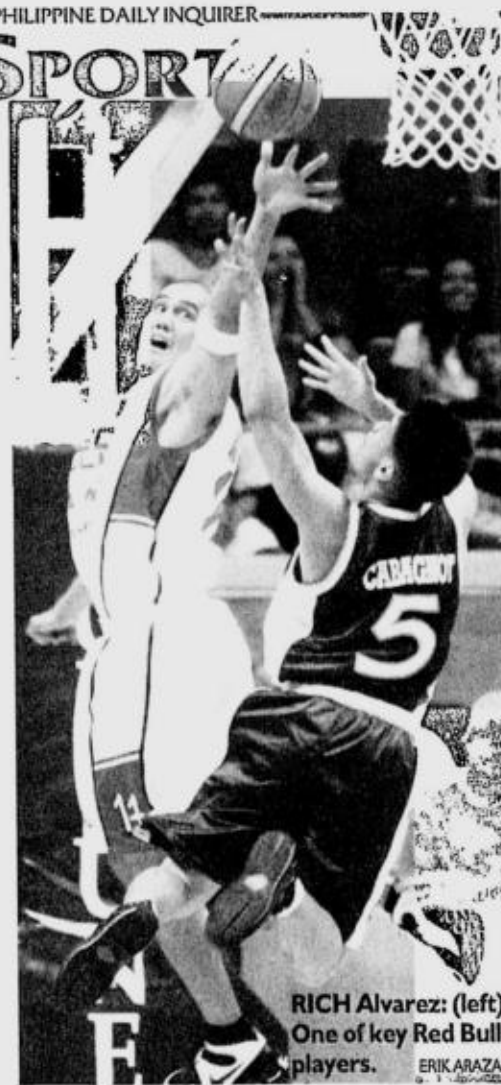
GAMES TODAY
(Araneta Coliseum)
4:35 p.m.—Coca-Cola vs Alaska
7:20 p.m.—Red Bull vs Welcoat

Lim said he never threw a punch, but admitted that he "instigated the whole thing" by charging into Red Bull's part of the court "because Yeng cursed at me."

"Yes, I charged at him (Guiao) and I started the whole thing," Lim said. "But what the PBA should find out is what drove me to do that. He cursed at my players and then at me and that pissed me off."

A statement from the PBA said that Eala will fine Guiao and Lim "no less than P50,000 each," and suspended for two games, with the Red Bull coach starting his with the Barako's 7:20 p.m. encounter with Welcoat today.

"That is unfair, being penalized the same way as he will be," Guiao added. "He (Lim) crossed the line and he has no business doing that."



RICH Alvarez (left)
One of key Red Bull players.

Greenwater Meadows clings to Flight C lead

BAGUIO CITY—GREENWATER Meadows shot 90 points and Bataan Societe de Golpe made 77 to remain on top after two days of the 57th Fil-Am Invitational regular tournament here.

Douglas Puckett and brothers Larry and Gary combined for 69 to go with Eddie Hernandez's 21 at the par 69 Camp John Hay Golf Club course to steer Greenwater Meadows to the top in the Fil Division Flight C lead with 189.

Davao Eaglemasters scored 94 and Capitol Hills Golf Club carded 93 to retain second and third places with 185 and 181, respectively. That 77 gave Bataan 155 and the Am Division Flight C lead. Pacific Rim fired 88 and Capitol Hills carded 77 to remain within sight with 151 and 149, respectively.

The Pucketts again made a sentimental return to Camp John Hay. In their youth, they caddied there before immigrating to California. Eldest brother Fred stayed at

home and now plays for John Hay. Bataan's scorers via the Stableford scoring system were Bebot de Jesus with 23, Gil Galina 20, Rene Lomibao 18 and Bernard Chang 16. Arnold Gunacao was the fifth man with 22 and did not count.

For the second straight day, teams in the lower divisions took center stage since the top guns in the higher classes will only start today in the long-running tournament.

Nike Golf Pacesports will start its title defenses in the Fil and Am divisions' championships against Del Monte Golf Club, Manila Southwoods, Mizuno and newcomer Eastridge.

Tori Polies shot an 88 to place fourth in the Fil division Flight C. City Mortgage of Hawaii is next with 83-164 while Batch 92 made 79 to be in sixth spot with 161.

Northwest Flyers came up with an 83 to take the next slot with 161, followed by PMA Cavaliers 81-159 and Veterans 85-158.

Dandan, Barte lead RP charge

By Marc Anthony Reyes



KYLE Joshua Dandan: Gunning for second straight crown

KYLE DANDAN FLASHED THE form that made him unbeatable last week, thrashing his Russian foe to lead the country's two-pronged charge to the second round of the Phinma-ITF junior tennis championships Week 2 yesterday at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

The rangy 6-foot Dandan, who trained this year under the International Tennis Academy in Florida, was hardly challenged in scoring a 6-2, 6-4 victory over qualifier Artem Ilyshin, whom he defeated in the quarterfinals en route to his Week 1 title last Sunday.

"So far so good, I like the way I am playing now and I hope I can sustain my level of game," said the 17-year-old Dandan, who advanced with compatriot Ralph Kevin Barte.

Barte, a former RP junior Davis Cupper who is unseeded here, edged Japanese Hiroyasu, 6-3, 6-4, making it a double-edge assault on the local bets. Dandan, ranked 173rd in

world juniors, will face Dimitri Kovalov of Ukraine, who bundled out Hong Kong's Dino Delorto, 6-1, 6-4.

Dandan said he is confident of repeating his title feat last week, being the highest-ranked player here. He has also defeated Kovalov during their previous encounter.

Barte is pitted against second seed Korean Choi Jae Won, who ousted Filipinos wild card Jose Lorenzo Oplencia, 6-2, 6-2.

Australia's Matheson Klein and Malaysia's Mohd Ashaa Zainal also displayed impressive wins yesterday, defeating their respective opponents to get to the next round.

Klein, a quarterfinalist last week, shocked fifth-seeded Taiwanese Jui-Chen Hung, 6-3, 6-3. Zainal downed No. 6 Indonesian Lenz Theodor, 6-4, 6-1, to make it.

Klein will take on Martin Short of Great Britain, who prevailed over Singaporean Sylvester Wee, 7-5, 7-5, as Zainal lock horns with Thailand's Sorapan Imprapal, a 6-4, 6-3 winner over Taiwanese Jui-Ping Yu.

All set for 30th national Milo marathon Sunday

THE BEST RUNNERS FROM DIFFERENT AREAS have been determined. On Sunday, the 30th season of the National Milo Marathon boils down to one final race, a grueling 42.195-kilometer run.

After 29 qualifying races in 29 key cities, 325 finalists have emerged. Each one aiming to dethrone reigning Milo Marathon champions Cresenciano Sabal and Jho-an Banayag and pocket the P75,000 purse.

But that is easier said than done. Sabal owns the course record of 2 hours, 21 minutes and 33 seconds while Banayag, who joined the Philippine team after topping last year's finale, has been training in Baguio for almost a year now.

Sabal's strongest challengers include two-time national champion Allan Ballester, back-to-back Yakult 10-Miler winner Bernardo Desamito, last year's runner-up Juniel Languido and veterans Rolando Piamonte, Rodolfo Tacadino, Reynaldo delos Reyes, Mamerto Corpuz and Rio dela Cruz.

Former champion and record holder Eduardo Buenavista will not be able to run because he is in Doha, Qatar, representing the country in the marathon event of the 15th Asian Games.

Banayag, on the other hand, will be challenged by former champions Liza Yambao (2003) and Estella Mamac-Diaz (2004) as well as National Capital Region winner Allene Tolentino. Other runners to watch in the women's side are Christy Sevileno, Gloria Diaz, Ellen Tolentino, Luisa Raterta and Camila Luterte.

More than P700,000 in prize money will be given away, including prizes for the 10K, 5K and Kiddies 3K side events.

The male and female second placers in the 42K run will also receive P50,000 each while the third placers settle for P30,000 apiece.

The top three finishers of this foot race will also bring home elegant glass trophies.

The race is also supported by Mayor Lito Atienza's Manila Sports Council headed by son Ali as well as the city governments of Pasay, Paranaque, Makati and Taguig. Providing security during the race are PNP, MMMA, PNRC, PCSM and Spectrum communications.

Meanwhile, a carbo-loading party will be hosted by Milo tomorrow at the North Greenhills Club House in Greenhills, San Juan to honor all finalists. The party starts at 5:30 p.m. For info call 727 9987.

SPORTSWATCH

St. Francis edges Olivarez

THE ST. FRANCIS DOVES NIPPED THE OLIVAREZ College Sea Lions, 80-77, in the 14th Petron-National Capital Region Athletic Association (NCRAA) men's basketball tournament Monday. The Doves were spared from another loss when Sea Lion Jun Arteta's triple with 1.3 seconds left rimmed out, sending the Doves to their third triumph in four outings at the Olivarez College gym. The Doves tied the Arellano University Chiefs, the Emilio Aguinaldo College Generals and the PUP Maroons at second spot. The Maroons whipped the NCBA Wildcats, 89-77.

Cavite derby semis today

THE SEMIFINAL ROUND OF CAVITE 7-COCK INTERNATIONAL Derby blasts off today at Cavite Coliseum Derby Center and Casino (Km 18, Aguinaldo Highway, Bacoor Cavite) with 90 fights on tap. The opening round last Wednesday was dominated by the entries of boxing champ Manny Pacquiao, Louie Cua and Dori Du of Davao, Gov. Ito Ynares and US cockers Rey Morrison and Red Dawson, Pepito Ngo, Kap Ducar of Ilo-Ilo, Pabing Ballelos, Sam Mendoza of Calinta Coliseum, Bebot Uy, Eric dela Rosa and Butchuy Olano of Pasay. Hosts are former Sen. Ramon Revilla Sr., lawyer Rudy Salud, Lito Orillaza and William Co. Contact Ferdie Bautista (046) 970-9971; (046) 970-4810 or 0915-5742399

Makati Salpukan stakes P3M

REGARDLESS OF THE NUMBER OF ENTRIES, A jackpot prize of P3 million awaits winners in the P-maskong Salpukan 6-cock derby at Makati Coliseum on Dec. 11, 13, 16, 18, 20, 23, 27 and 30. It has an entry fee of P11,000 and minimum bet of P5,500. Host is the WTJ Sports and Amusement Corp. A participant may field an entry during the 3-cock elimination rounds on Dec. 11, 13, 16, 18, 20 and 23. A bonus of P100,000 will be divided per day among elimination three pointers. Qualifiers with 1.5 and 2 points will advance to the semis on Dec. 27. Those with 2.5 and 3 points clash for the title on Dec. 30. For details, call 896-3545 and 895-6475.



By TOP CHOICE
Race 1—(Or/Tri)—Smile N Joy (1), Grand Slam (4), Kuzza's Magic (2), Mr. Godfather (5)
Race 2—(Or/Tri)—Baling Westside (3), Freddy Venter (4), Bumble Johnson (1), Speed Admiral (7)
Race 3—(Or/Tri)—Wind Runner (2), Native Land (7), Manhattan (5), Ocean Deep (4)
Race 4—(Or/Tri)—War Hero (1), Without Warning (3), Wings To

Race 5—(Super 6/Or/Tri)—Gold Money (11), Extreme Romance (9), Ocean Cooke (1), Dixie Dash (2), Interceptor (9), Yoo Man (8)
Race 6—(Penta/Or/Tri)—Gentleman's Lady (7), J's Friend (8), Bashful Jojo (1), My Little Africa (6), Heart of My Soul (4)
Race 7—(Cost of Arms) (11), Men Of Honor (10), She Boom (5), Snow Princess (2), Saving Grace (9), Power of the Wind (2)
Race 8—(Penta/Or/Tri)—Baltong Silver (8), Duce The Younger (4), Gung Ho (5), Reporter (3), Iron Tower (10)
Race 9—(Super 6/Or/Tri)—Shifty (14), Kamro (10), Sa Wokas (13), Patago (7), Just a Moment

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SPORTS

Wizards zap Mavs streak

WASHINGTON—GILBERT ARENAS POURED in 38 points and Antawn Jamison and Etan Thomas chipped in with double-doubles to help the Washington Wizards snap the Dallas Mavericks' 12-game win streak with a 106-97 victory on Monday.

After opening the season with four straight losses, the Mavericks had been unstoppable, reeling off 12 straight wins, including a 107-80 demolition of Wizards on Nov. 21.

The Wizards avenged their worst loss of the season by claiming their first win over Dallas. The Washington victory also stopped the Mavericks' two games short of equaling their franchise record unbeaten run of 14 games.

Washington received double-digit efforts from all five starters, Jamison hitting for 20 points and 12 rebounds and Thomas 10 points and 11 boards.

Caron Butler flirted with a triple-double, contributing 14 points, nine rebounds and seven assists as the Wizards improved to 7-2 at home.

"Our energy was up," Butler told reporters. "We executed our offense and we were successful."

"I was trying to do everything. Trying to get off the ball, run the offense, and use my versatility as my strength," added the versatile forward.

"I wasn't trying to force anything."

"Good things happened. My teammates were making shots. It was just a great win."

Dirk Nowitzki paced the Mavericks with 27 points and grabbed nine rebounds, and Jerry Stackhouse, Devean George and Devin Harris each had 14 in the loss.

The Wizards took a commanding 88-66 lead after three quarters but the Mavericks rallied in the fourth, slicing the deficit to 102-95 with just over a minute to play.

But the Mavericks could not complete the comeback as the Wizards held on to register their third win in four games.

Meanwhile, Eddy Curry had 26 points and 15 rebounds, and Quentin Richardson and David Lee each had 20 points as the New York Knicks defeated the Memphis Grizzlies, 98-90, to record just their second home win of the season. *Reuters*

COMPLETE NBA RESULTS: Washington 106, Dallas 97; New York 98, Memphis 90; San Antonio 129, Golden State 89; Chicago 100, Boston 82; Utah 101, Milwaukee 88; Orlando 92, Sacramento 89; LA Lakers 101, Indiana 87



GILBERT Arenas of the Washington Wizards (right) drives the lane to the basket in front of Erick Dampier of the Dallas Mavericks. *REUTERS*

Yi lifts China past Uzbekistan



YI *AP*

DOHA, QATAR—NBA PROSPECT YI JIANLIAN scored 21 points Monday as China beat Uzbekistan, 91-68, for its second straight win in the 15th Asian Games' basketball tournament here.

Sun Yue led the winners with 22 points, while Aleksandr Kozlov scored 24 points for Uzbekistan.

Yi, who has been given permission by his Chinese club to consider overseas offers, is expected to be chosen high up in next June's NBA draft.

AP

He was six for 10 from the floor in field goals Monday and hit on nine free throws in 10 attempts after being fouled eight times in the game. He also had eight rebounds.

In other games Monday, Taiwan edged Kazakhstan, 81-79, and Japan beat Lebanon, 78-67. The results left Japan and China with 2-0 marks atop Group B, Lebanon and Taiwan at 1-1 and Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan 0-2. *AP*

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HOMEGROWN
Race for semifinal slots picks up pace

FIVE TEAMS JOCKEY FOR POSITION as two semifinal slots remain up for grabs in Group A of the FilOil-Flying V Homegrown Invitational Cup.

The Far Eastern Tamaraws, tied with the Jose Rizal Bombers and the Letran Knights at 2-2, will take on the San Sebastian Stags at noon today at the Philsports Arena.

Letran will battle the University of the East Warriors at 2 p.m., while the University of the Philippines Maroons and the Ateneo Blue Eagles clash at 4 p.m.

JRU will cap the elimination round versus NCAA champion San Beda Lions at 6 p.m.

The La Salle Archers and the University of the East Warriors already secured Final Four berths after topping Group B.

The idle University of Santo Tomas Tigers wrapped up their elimination run at 2-3, but remain in semifinal contention in Group A.

Even the Eagles, languishing at 1-3, have a slim chance to forge a

tie and advance to the next round.

In the event teams finish with similar records, the team with the superior tie-break quotient will move on to the Final Four.

Surprisingly struggling, the Eagles and the Maroons have been at the bottom of their respective groups throughout the tournament.

The Maroons remain as the only winless team in Group B, while the Eagles' only triumph came in a double-overtime victory over San Sebastian, 82-81.

Schools only play against teams in the opposing group during the elimination round.

The top two teams in each group will advance to the semifinal round. But this time, teams compete within their group in a knockout format.

Banking on their veterans, the Archers swept the elimination at 5-0 in Group A.

The Warriors will try to accomplish the same feat versus the Knights, who are coming off a 77-76 loss to the Lions. *Jasmine W. Payo*

Roach dares top fighters: Take on 'Boom Boom'

By Salven Lagumbay
Contributor

LOS ANGELES—TRAINER FRED- die Roach has dared the top fighters in the world to line themselves up for a fight with undefeated Filipino Rey "Boom Boom" Bautista.

"Line them all up. No problem," Roach told this writer in an interview yesterday at the Wild Card Gym where Bautista bade farewell to his renowned trainer before flying to Manila with him team.

Bautista is set to arrive today in Manila accompanied by his Filipino promoter Sammy Gello-ani and trainer Edito Villamor.

Bautista kept his slate clean with a scintillating fourth-round TKO of Brazilian Giovanni Andrade in Tampa, Florida.

Roach is set to fly to Manila on Dec. 14 to attend to the baptism of Manny Pacquiao's daughter as well as the house inauguration of the Filipino icon.

In Manila, Bautista is set to meet with the media, including television giants ABS-CBN and Solar Sports.

Meanwhile, the World Cup of boxing is fast taking shape as Gello-ani is currently negotiating with Golden Boy Promotions top executives and international matchmaker Sampson Lewkowicz.

Gello-ani stressed that the Cup will most likely take place on Feb. 25, 2007, with Bautista likely to headline the historic event featuring Filipino challengers against Mexican world champions.

IN THIS ISSUE



■ MVP's HK\$1
challenge /B3

■ 20-yr treasury bond
rate falls to 8% /B2

BUSINESS

Editor Raul O. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Corrie S. Narisma

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DMCI group acquires water concession

Bid of \$447.23M clinches stake in Maynilad

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE CONSORTIUM OF DMCI HOLDINGS INC. AND Metro Pacific Holdings Inc. has won the right to supply water to Metro Manila's west zone.

The group's \$447.23-million offer for the government's 83.9-percent stake in Maynilad Water Services Inc. topped the bid of Manila Water Co. Inc.

MWCI, a unit of the country's oldest conglomerate Ayala Corp., had offered to pay the government \$399.99 million for the water concession.

As part of the deal, the consortium is not expected to shoulder the \$300-million debt of Maynilad to foreign banks and the country's water regulator. The group will also have to pay the government \$56.4 million in concession fees, and post a \$30-million performance bond.

"We believe it was an aggressive

bid, but we also believe that the company (Maynilad) could be turned around," said Herbert Con-sunji, DMCI chief financial officer.

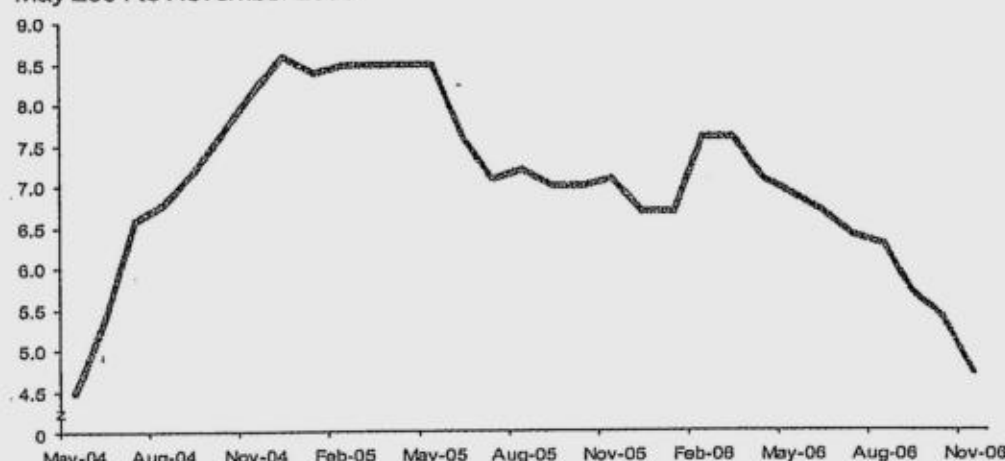
The transaction marked the second time the government has sold the water concession in the western part of Metro Manila since 1997.

The regulator Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) last year re-acquired Maynilad from a group of private investors led by conglomerate Ben-pres Holdings Corp.

DMCI/B2

Inflation Rates

May 2004 to November 2006



Inflation at lowest level since '04

By Michelle V. Remo and Doris C. Dumlaog

CONSUMER PRICES GREW 4.7 PERCENT IN November from a year ago, further slowing down to a new two-year low as a result of a stronger peso and easing prices of oil.

The inflation level in November, which was the lowest since June 2004, was within the forecast of 4.5 to 5.2 percent by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP). In October, inflation hit 5.4 percent.

Excluding volatile prices of selected food and energy items, core inflation likewise stood at 4.7 percent in November, slowing down from the previous month's 5.1 percent.

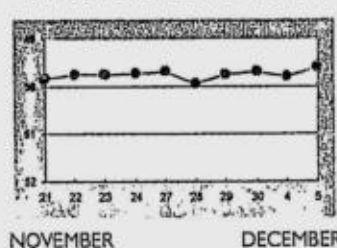
All commodity groups posted a slower inflation rate in November, except for housing and repairs, that kept its previous month's level of growth in prices.

Data from the National Statistics Office (NSO) showed that inflation for food, beverage and tobacco (FBT) decelerated from 5.1 percent in October to 4.9 percent in November; clothing, from 3 percent to 2.9 percent; fuel, light and water (FLW), from 11.4 percent to 7.7 percent; services, from 6.1 percent to 4.4 percent; and miscellaneous items, from 2.7 percent to 2.5 percent.

Inflation rate for food alone settled at 4.8

INFLATION/B3

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 49.58 = \$1

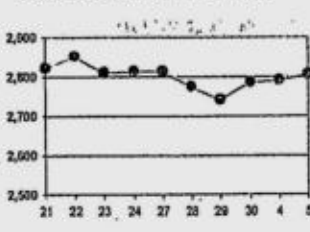
As of 5 p.m., Dec. 5, 2006

INDICATORS

STOCK MARKET

Shares close marginally higher in mixed trading

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B4)

SHARE PRICES YESTERDAY CLOSED 0.46 PER-cent higher, supported by gains in index heavy-weight Philippine Long Distance Telephone which offset profit-taking elsewhere, dealers said.

Many investors stayed on the sidelines due to lack of compelling leads, although speculative interest buoyed another index-linked stock, DMCI Holdings, they said.

The composite index rose 12.79 points to 2,808.09 after trading between 2,795.13 and 2,810.57.

SHARES/B3

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20-yr treasury bond rate falls to 8%

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Treasury notes lack of investor appetite

By Michelle V. Remo

THE YIELD ON THE 20-YEAR TREASURY bonds fell to 8 percent yesterday, as authorities rejected what they described as "throw-away bids" due to the lack of appetite for government securities.

The new rate for the long-term government securities was 110.1 basis points lower than the 9.101 percent recorded during the last auction in September (100 basis points is equal to one percentage point).

Had the Bureau of the Treasury's auction committee accepted all bids for the 20-year bonds, the interest rate would have settled at a higher 8.25 percent, still lower than the 9.101 percent recorded in September.

But National Treasurer Omar Cruz said the BTr opted to just accept some of the bids because the other bids were too high.

Cruz said some banks quoted "absurdly high interest rates."

The 20-year bonds were under-subscribed, with tenders reaching only P4.522 billion, short of the government's debt offer of P6 billion.

The BTr accepted only P4.322 billion worth of bids.

"The market is waiting for a clearer signal. In the meantime, that (weak appetite for the bids) is fine with us," Cruz said.

The government is not in dire need for cash given its improving fiscal position, he added.

Cruz added that the weak appetite for bonds was partly due to declining interest rates.

"Gone are the days when interest rates were at double-digit. When inflation is going back to where it was (in early 2000), and now that the government is borrowing less, it is hard to increase interest rates," Cruz said.

Inflation slowed down further to settle at a new two-year low of 4.7 percent in November from 5.4 percent in October.

The deceleration of inflation was anchored on the strengthening peso, which makes imported goods cheaper and easing prices of oil in the world market.

Lower inflation normally results in a decline in interest rate.

Slowdown in inflation means the increase in consumer prices would not significantly eat into the income earned from investments in government securities, therefore does not give enough reason for investors to seek for higher interest rates from these debt instruments.

SMC to pursue debt offer

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SAN MIGUEL CORP. STILL INTENDS TO pursue its hybrid debt offer as soon as the independent audit of the books of its beverage subsidiaries is completed, a source privy to the company's affairs said.

Sources said the company was still awaiting the results of an external audit of the beverage group's financial statements of the past three years.

"The intention is to pursue the offer, we need to restructure the debts," the source said.

San Miguel earlier planned to offer \$500 million in hybrid bonds next year.

Last April 28, SMC was forced to postpone what was touted then as Asia's maiden hybrid bond offer after reports surfaced that it had allegedly overstated the sales of its beverage subsidiaries.

Proceeds from San Miguel's proposed hybrid offer were to be used to pay existing debt worth roughly \$300 million and for general corporate purposes, including capital expenditures and future acquisitions, the company's preliminary prospectus for the offering had indicated.

PNOC to light up more homes

By Abigail L. Ho

THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL OIL CO. HAS partnered with the Alliance for Mindanao Off-Grid Renewable Energy (Amore) program to provide electricity to 1,380 households in 46 barangays in Tawi-Tawi, Maguindanao and Zamboanga del Sur.

Under their memorandum of agreement, PNOC will provide the solar home systems that will be used in the barangay electrification project, while Amore will identify the specific areas and households where these will be installed.

Apart from PNOC and Amore, Shell Solar Philippines Corp. will also be participating in the project by installing, testing and providing maintenance services for the solar home systems.

This is part of Shell Solar's service contract with the PNOC under the PNOC Solar Homes System Distribution Project.

PNOC had earlier partnered with Mirant Foundation to provide electricity to 2,490 families in 83 barangays, also in Amore-identified areas.

The state firm's Solar Homes System Distribution Project, which it aims to complete by mid-2007, is a joint undertaking by PNOC, the Department of Energy and Shell Solar.

It involves the sale and distribution of 15,100 solar home systems to various areas around the country within five years.

The areas covered include parts of the Cordillera Administrative Region, Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Southern Tagalog, Bicol, Western Visayas, Central Visayas and Mindanao.

DMCI group acquires ...

From page B1

The weight of debt payments following the 1997-1998 Asian financial crisis had led to heavy losses for Maynilad, with Benpres opting to put the water utility under rehabilitation before it exited the concession completely in July 2005.

Eleven investor groups, including foreign firms, had expressed initial interest in Maynilad. But only DMCI and Manila Water remained in the final race.

French utilities group Suez SA, which holds the remaining 16 percent in Maynilad, said it was keeping its stake in the water utility.

"We have no intention to sell the 16 percent," said Jacques Letondot, Suez group representative. "And as of now we are glad that we have a new partner."

The French company's stake is valued at

\$4.320 million.

Part of the proceeds from the bidding will be used to finance Maynilad's three-year capital expenditure program.

Consunji noted that the company's fundamentals are good since the government took over almost two years ago.

He said that Maynilad recorded a P2.1 billion net income in 2005. By the end of this year, the company is expecting P1.6 billion.

The consortium will take over and continue operations of the west zone for the remaining years of the 25-year concession.

Maynilad covers all of Metro Manila, except San Andres and Sta. Ana, parts of Quezon City, Makati, Caloocan, Pasay, Parañaque, Las Piñas, Muntinlupa, Valenzuela, Navotas, Malabon, Cavite City and some towns of Cavite province. *With a report from Reuters*

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MVP's HK\$1 challenge

MANUEL V. PANGILINAN IS about to open a new Hong Kong front in his PLDT/Smart challenge to snatch a large chunk of the remittance business from the established Philippine banks in the former Crown Colony.

According to the grapevine, Smart is quietly testing a HK\$1-per-transaction cellular phone remittance scheme, drastically lower than the up-to-HK\$30 transaction fee that a number of Philippine banks and finance companies charge Filipino domestics for money remittance to the Philippines.

In preparation for the launch, Smart has already leased two shop spaces in Worldwide House, the popular mall in Hong Kong's Central district that is home to banks, cargo forwarders, groceries, fast-food shops, and beauty parlors, catering to the HK's estimated 120,000 Filipino domestic helpers.

The Hong Kong branches of Philippine banks are apparently so threatened by Smart's cutthroat rate that bank officers have lately been doing the rounds of OFW meetings to deliver a subtle message—it is (arguably) safer to remit money through the banks.

According to Hong Kong-based financial journalist Juanito Concepcion, even the industry's Philippine Bankers Club of Hong Kong has gotten into the act, sponsoring a singing contest for overseas Filipino workers and donating cash prizes.

Domestic helpers earn a legally mandated minimum wage of \$3,260 (about P20,864) a month.

Assuming each maid remits an average of HK\$1,000 (P6,400) to the Philippines a month, the Hong Kong money flow easily translates to HK\$120 million (P768 million), month after month.

Joker mightier than Pen

SEN. JOKER ARROYO has a fitting gift for Manila Peninsula founder Patricio L. Lim as the luxury hotel celebrates its 30th anniversary tomorrow.

According to the grapevine, Arroyo recently ran into the Lim couple in one social occasion and, then and there, the maverick senator told PL Lim that he was dropping the criminal complaint he had filed against Lim and top Pen officials.

The criminal complaint was an offshoot of Arroyo, then a Makati

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin



congressman, and Teodoro Locsin Jr., now a Makati congressman representing Arroyo's district, being on the receiving end of verbal and physical abuse heaped by an apparently drunk foreign guest at the Pen lobby.

Lim and other Pen officials were included in the criminal complaint by Arroyo and Locsin after the expatriate Pen general manager spirited the guest out of the hotel.

Thereafter, the Pen GM also hastily left the country. With his ally now putting a closure to the incident, Locsin is also expected to join Arroyo in the filing of the desistance documents.

Incidentally, Lim and other Filipino partners have now been reduced to minority partners of the hotel, after ceding 76 percent control of the Pen to The Hong Kong and Shanghai Hotels Ltd. in exchange for cash and shares of stock of the Hong Kong-listed hotel and property conglomerate last year.

To mark the Pen's pearl anniversary, Hong Kong billionaire and Peninsula chain owner Sir Michael Kadoorie is flying in to meet and thank partners and loyal patrons, as well as unveil the hotel's new look, following a room-to-room renovation.

Heard through the grapevine

THE FEUD between former Toyota assembler Bulacan Mayor Ricardo Silverio Sr. and his son Ricardo Jr. has taken a turn for the worse.

Ricardo Jr. has now instituted bigamy and falsification complaint against his father's second wife, Bulacan Rep. Lorna Cillian-Silverio, claiming that the congresswoman is still married to her estranged husband, one Enrico Javier.

An incensed Vicente Chuidian, counsel of Silverio Sr., immediately shot down the bigamy allegation as "completely false," adding that he himself had prepared the legal separation papers for the present Mrs. Silverio.

(Email: cocktales@cocktales.biz)

Shares close ...

From page B1

The broader all-share index rose 4.94 points to 1,751.22.

Losers beat gainers 47 to 43 with 67 stocks unchanged.

Turnover was 1.78 billion shares worth P1.9 billion (\$38.3

million). The peso at midday was at 49.644 to the dollar.

PLDT jumped P55 to P2,500. DMCI Holdings rose 30 centavos to P5.70. Manila Water, fell 75

centavos to P10. **AFP**

Inflation rate ...

From page B1

percent in November, slower than the 5.2 percent in October.

"The inflation figure for November ... confirms the BSP's outlook for continued deceleration in price increases," Bangko Sentral Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. told reporters. "The slowdown in inflation is supported by the present consolidation in oil prices and the overall appreciation of the peso."

An appreciating peso helps slow down inflation because it makes the cost of imported goods cheaper. The peso closed at 49.73 against the US dollar in end-November this year, much stronger than the 54.15 in the same month a year ago.

The BSP attributes the strengthening of the peso to growth in dollar inflows, partly due to the increase in remittances sent by overseas Filipino workers to their families.

The easing prices of oil in the world market also tempered inflation, given that at least 90 percent of the country's oil requirements is imported.

The Department of Energy said Dubai crude, the benchmark used in setting domestic oil prices, averaged at \$56.72 a barrel in November. Early this year, oil prices had been hitting record highs and even breached the \$60-a-barrel level.

The slowdown in inflation took away pressure on the BSP to tighten its monetary policy, although Tetangco said the monetary authority would be keeping an eye on the inflationary impact of the growing liquidity in the system.

Next year, the BSP expects the inflation rate to return to the government's target level of 4-5 percent, despite the recent surge in domestic liquidity, which had just hit a four-year high.

Based on the BSP's report for October, the country's growth in domestic liquidity, or m3, accelerated further to 16.1 percent from 14.5 percent in September. It was the highest level seen by the country since 2002, and was in excess of the 13-percent maximum growth desired by the BSP.

Domestic liquidity is the broadest measure of money and is used to estimate the entire supply of money within an economy. It includes money in circulation, demand deposits, money market funds and short-term repurchase agreements.

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Singapore, Jakarta marts hit new highs

Malaysian, Philippine stocks also climbed

SINGAPORE—SINGAPORE STOCKS ROSE 0.98 percent to a record high on Tuesday, led by banks such as DBS Group Holdings, as investors bet that lenders would benefit from financing the construction of two planned casinos.

The Straits Times Index hit an all-time high of 2,879.66 points, beating its previous record high of 2,860.21 points set on Nov. 30.

Indonesian stocks jumped 2 percent and also hit an all-time high of 1,766.458 points. The previous record high of 1,738.406 points was struck on Nov. 27.

Elsewhere, Malaysian shares climbed 0.96 percent, and Philippine shares added 0.46 percent.

The Thai market was closed on Tuesday for the King's birthday.

In Singapore, analysts said investors eyed banks ahead of the government's announcement—expected this week—of the winning bid for the city-state's second casino resort. The deal is worth as much as \$3.5 billion.

"People are looking at the banks because they may benefit from financing the casinos," said Najeeb Jarhom, the research head at Fraser Securities.

DBS, Southeast Asia's largest lender, rose 1.4 percent to hit its highest level in over six years.

United Overseas Bank, Singapore's second-largest lender, climbed 1.6 percent, and Overseas-Chinese Banking Corp. added 1.3 percent to a record high.

Genting International, a member of one of the three consortia that have submitted bids to build the resort, jumped 2.3 percent to a record high. The stock surged 14.3 percent on Monday.

Looking ahead, strategists said that investors should reduce their risk because regional markets looked overbought, and that corporate earnings may disappoint next year amid a slowing US economy.

The 14-day relative strength indices for the key stock indices in Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia all stand above 70 points, indicating that markets are overbought.

"The key thing is to reduce risk appetites," said Sean Darby, the regional strategist at Nomura, adding that share prices have not factored in a slowdown in the United States, Asia's biggest export market.

In Jakarta, Telkom Indonesia, the largest telecommunications company, jumped 5 percent to a record high on foreign buying.

The Indonesian market has pulled in \$1.8 billion worth of foreign investment in the year to date, compared with a net outflow of \$1.8 billion in 2005, according to Nomura analyst Kenneth Chan.

In Kuala Lumpur, dominant telephone provider Telekom Malaysia Bhd led gains with a 3.2 percent jump.

The local media said on Tuesday that the telecom was in talks with several par-

ties to sell its public pay-phone business as part of its plan to dispose of noncore operations.

But shares in New Straits Times Press and smaller rival publisher Utusan Melayu tumbled 15.3 percent and 16.4 percent respectively, after New Straits Times failed to clinch a deal to take over Utusan Melayu on Monday. Sources told Reuters that political pressure scuppered the deal.

Local media had reported that the United Malays National Organisation—Utusan Melayu's controlling shareholder and the key party in Malaysia's government—feared that the daily would lose its identity if taken over by New Straits Times.

Reuters

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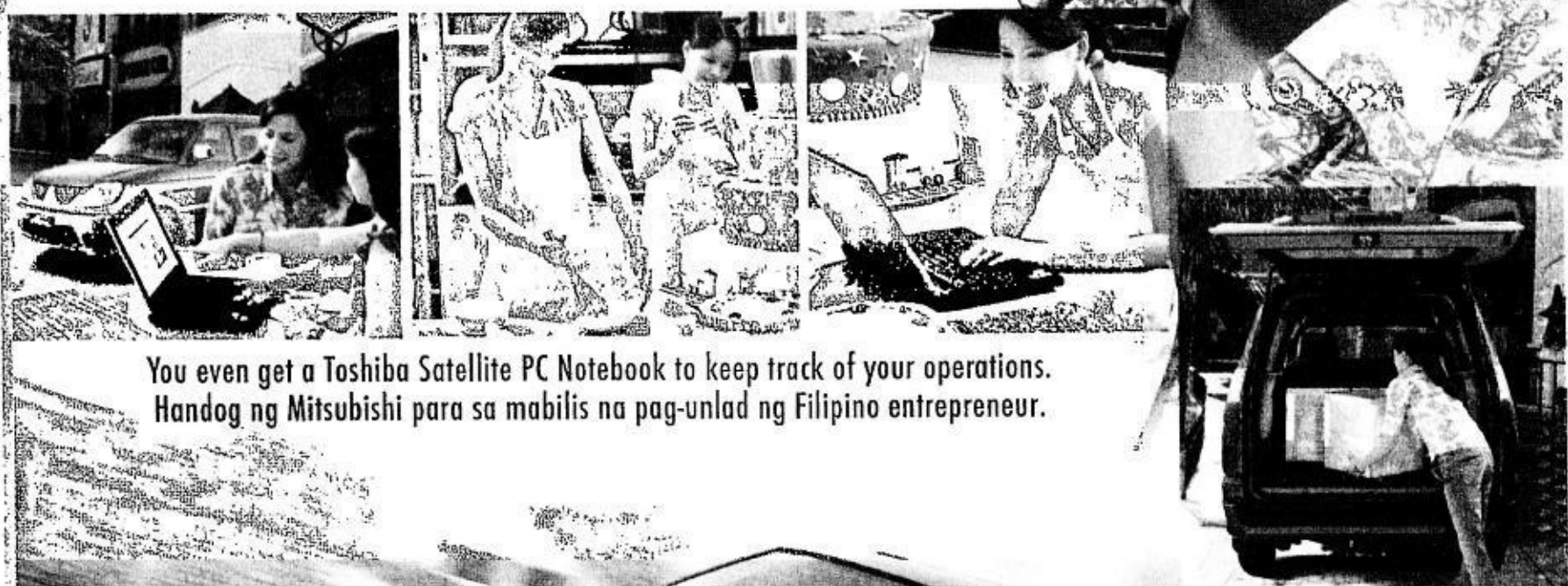
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Yahoo taps into massive OFW market

INTERNET GIANT YAHOO ON TUESDAY unveiled a global project aimed at tapping into the vast market of Filipino overseas workers.

The "Pinoy Connect" project features a special website designed to meet the needs of an estimated eight million Filipinos, or 10 percent of the population, working abroad as well as their families back home.

In the first nine months of 2006, overseas Filipinos remitted an estimated \$9.11 billion, providing critical support to the economy. This does not include cash sent home through informal, nonbank channels.

The new site www.yahoo.com.ph/pinoy features news, entertainment, mobile services, chat groups, mobile communications and instant messaging services targets Filipino workers and their dependents.

A press statement from Yahoo! said the project had the support of Philippine government agencies, private firms and the Roman Catholic church, to which a majority of Filipinos belong.

"We believe the Internet can transform lives and we believe that Yahoo! can make a difference for Filipinos living around the world who need to communicate and stay in touch," said Reza Behnam, managing director of Yahoo! Southeast Asia.

Leading Philippines-based portals have also tapped into the overseas workers' market, offering a wide range of services such as remittances and home sales.

A new building boom is sweeping across Manila and surrounding areas, fueled by cash-flush overseas Filipinos looking to invest in retirement homes.

Rising property prices are helping drive the surge of Philippine share prices to levels not seen since the mid-1997 Asian financial crisis.

AFP

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MODEL	SRP	D/P	12 mos.	18 mos.	24 mos.	36 mos.	48 mos.	60 mos.	72 mos.
Adventure GLX DSL	763,000	70,000	58,158	39,805	31,739	22,618	18,100	15,582	14,032
Adventure GLS SPORT DSL	830,000	94,500	63,265	43,301	34,526	24,604	19,690	16,950	15,264

* Available through Banco de Oro, BPI Family Bank, Chinabank, EastWest Bank, Ibank, Maybank, PHILAM Savings Bank, PS Bank, RCBC Savings Bank and Union Bank.
* All plans subject to bank approval.
* Other plans are also available for other Mitsubishi models.

Every purchase of a Mitsubishi Adventure GLX Diesel (7 or 9 seater) or Adventure GLS Sport Diesel (7 or 9 seater) under this Easy-Own Plan within the promo period gets you a free Toshiba Satellite L30-C330 PC Notebook. It can be claimed by presenting the claim certificate that will be given together with the official receipt of the car upon downpayment for a financing purchase or a cash purchase 10 days after the downpayment is made.



Promo ends December 29, 2006.

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METRO MANILA: CITIMOTORS, INC. - Makati (Main) - Tel. Nos. 892-0331 to 42 CITIMOTORS, INC. - Las Pinas - Tel. Nos. 875-1545 / 875-1704 DIAMOND MOTOR CORP. - Greenhills (Main) - Tel. Nos. 727-0351 to 90 DIAMOND MOTOR CORP. - Gluezon Ave. Tel. Nos. 372-3901 to 15 DIAMOND MOTOR CORP. - Marcos Highway - Tel. Nos. 615-4801 to 05 DIAMOND MOTOR - Fairview Tel. Nos. 935-3731, 418-2945 DIAMOND MOTOR CORP. - Valle Verde - Tel. Nos. 671-9590 to 94 MITSUBISHI MOTORS BALINTAWAK - Tel. Nos. 330-7574/8901 to 05 UNION MOTOR CORP. - Paco (Main) - Tel. Nos. 563-8481 to 85 / 563-8481 to 67 UNION MOTOR CORP. - Kalookan - Tel. Nos. 364-2061 to 69 LUZON DEALERS: AMCAR AUTOMOTIVE CORP. - Sta. Rosa, Laguna - Tel. Nos. (049) 541-1259 / (02) 420-8057 CALES MOTOR CORP. - Naga City Tel. Nos. (054) 811-6119 CARWORLD, INC. - Pangasinan (Main) Tel. Nos. (045) 963-1111 CARWORLD, INC. - Marikina Tel. Nos. (044) 791-6320 / 791-2405 to 06 CARWORLD, INC. - Marikina Tel. Nos. (044) 711-2895 to 97 CARWORLD, INC. - Cagayan Tel. Nos. (047) 222-3743 / 224-4307 CARWORLD, INC. - Taguig Tel. Nos. (0452) 982-5551 to 53 FREEWAY MOTOR SALES OF BALUBAG CORP. - Balubag Tel. Nos. (044) 673-4083 / 765-4236 FREEWAY MOTOR SALES OF CABANATUAN CORP. - Cabanatuan (Main) Tel. Nos. (044) 463-1381 / 463-5105 FREEWAY MOTOR SALES - Isabela Tel. Nos. (078) 682-8401 JABEZ MOTOR CORP. - Dasmariñas Cavite Tel. Nos. (046) 416-5988 / 650-0119 / 416-5980 / 850-1681 MOTORPLAZA, INC. - Calatagan (Main) Tel. Nos. (075) 517-3060 / 517-6228 MOTORPLAZA, INC. - Baguio City Tel. Nos. (074) 300-3571 / 619-1023 MOTORPLAZA, INC. - La Union Tel. Nos. (072) 705-5050 MOTORPLAZA, INC. - Urdaneta Tel. Nos. (075) 568-2502 SFM SALES CORP. - San Pablo (Main) Tel. Nos. (049) 562-0890 to 91 / 562-8569 SFM SALES CORP. - Lupa Tel. Nos. (043) 756-1018 VISAYAS DEALERS: AVESCOR MOTORS - Iloilo Tel. Nos. (033) 337-4455 / 337-6480 / 337-6487 AVESCOR MOTORS - Bacolod Tel. Nos. (034) 435-2111 to 14 MITSUBISHI MOTORS CEBU CORP. (Main) Tel. Nos. (032) 345-1233 / 420-5777 MITSUBISHI MOTORS Cebu South - Cebu City - (032) 281-8395 MITSUBISHI MOTORS CEBU CORP. - Davao Tel. Nos. (035) 225-1427 to 29 / 225-6826 MITSUBISHI MOTORS CEBU CORP. - Tacloban Tel. Nos. (053) 323-2520 / 323-2379 to 80 / 323-3724 MITSUBISHI MOTORS CEBU CORP. - Tagbilaran Tel. Nos. (038) 411-2661 / 411-5814 to 15 MINDANAO DEALERS: KARASIA, INC. - Davao (Main) Tel. Nos. (082) 222-1111 to 16 KARASIA, INC. - Davao (South) Tel. Nos. (082) 298-1490 to 94 / 298-0175 to 77 KARASIA, INC. - Tagum Tel. Nos. (084) 217-3582 MINDANAO INTEGRATED COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISES, INC. Tel. Nos. (083) 302-0586 to 87 (083) 552-4781 MITSUBISHI MOTORS CEBU CORP. - Buluan Tel. Nos. (085) 815-3089 MITSUBISHI MOTORS CEBU CORP. - Cagayan de Oro Tel. Nos. (088) 855-1546 ZAMBOANGA MOTORS, INC. Tel. Nos. (062) 991-2138 / 993-0786

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY Philsugin Bldg., North Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE (BAC) SECRETARIAT OFFICE Tel. No. (632) 455-2758 Mobile Phone: (+63) 928 4102732 Email: vsvillarama@nfa.gov.ph

RE-INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID Printing of Registration Forms for 2007

LOT	PARTICULARS	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)
1	4,400 pads of Year 2007 Registration and Licensing Forms	308,500.00
2	5,000 booklets on NFA Rules and Regulations on Grains Business	250,000.00

Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

The NFA now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the Printing of Registration Forms for 2007. Delivery period is 45 calendar days. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, Instruction to Bidders (ITB).

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the NFA-BAC SECRETARIAT and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 A.M. TO 5:00 P.M.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of P2,000.00 in the form of CASH. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative. Prospective bidders who secured the bidding documents for the failed bidding of November 30, 2006 are no longer required to pay anew the non-refundable fee of P2,000.00 for the bid documents.

The NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on December 21, 2006 at 2:00 p.m. at the NFA Board Room, 6th floor, Philsugin Bldg., North Avenue, Quezon City.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered at the NFA Board Room, 6th floor, Philsugin Bldg., North Avenue, Quezon City on January 4, 2007 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:45 p.m. Late Bids shall not be accepted. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the following form and amount.

Form of Security	Required Amount in Percent of ABC
Cash, cashier's Check, Manager's Check, Bank draft or Irrevocable Letter of Credit	One Percent (1%)
Bank Guarantee	One and a half percent (1.5%)
Surety Bond stamped "Callable on Demand" on the face of the Bond issued by GSIS	Two and a half percent (2.5%)
Any combination of the above	Proportionate to share

Bid opening shall be on January 4, 2007 at 2:00 p.m. at the NFA Board Room, 6th floor, Philsugin Bldg., North Avenue, Quezon City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives.

In the event that the above dates shall be declared non-working days, the schedules shall automatically be reset to the next working day.

The NFA reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Procuring Entity: NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
 Contact Person: Jose D. Chua / Violeta S. Villarama
 Address: Philsugin Bldg., North Ave., Diliman, Quezon City
 Telephone/Fax No. (632) 455-2758
 Mobile Phone (+63) 928 4102732
 e-mail address vsvillarama@nfa.gov.ph
 Website www.nfa.gov.ph

(Sgd.) PEDRO S. HERNANDO, JR.
 Deputy Administrator and BAC Chair
 for Administration and General Support Services

(PDI - Dec. 6 & 13, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines **DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT** National Capital Region DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
WEST CONTACT SERVICES INC. 28/F, The Export Bank Plaza, Don Chino Rocas Ave. cor. Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City	Lydia Encinias	Performance Assessment Specialist
WEST CONTACT SERVICES INC. 28/F, The Export Bank Plaza, Don Chino Rocas Ave. cor. Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City	Aaron Thomas Gunning	Program Manager
SIEMENS, INC. 17/F, Salcedo Tower 169 H.V. dela Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Scott Arthur Little	Operations Manager
IBM BUSINESS SERVICES INC. 17th & 18th Floors, Cyber One Bldg., 11 Eastwood Ave., Eastwood City, Cyberpark, E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave., Libis, Quezon City	Kofa (Kohta) Kinoshita	Compensation Process Owner
CITIBANK, N.A. 8741 Paseo de Roxas Makati City	Madhur Ratanlal Mehra	Vice President and Cards Marketing Acquisition Head
WINIA PHILS. INC. U-321 Century Imperial Palace Suite Timog Ave. cor. T. Morato Quezon City	Choon Hwak Lee	General Manager
A JU GLOBAL TRANSPORT CORP. 1016 Sunrise St., Concorde Vill., Tambo, Parañaque City	Kyung Hun Lee	Chief Operating Officer
A JU GLOBAL TRANSPORT CORP. 1016 Sunrise St., Concorde Vill., Tambo, Parañaque City	Kyung Hwan Kim	Assistant Manager
AIRGLOBE, INC. S-322 Pair Pags Center, Ninoy Aquino Ave., Pasay City	Audrey Pon Geok Kam	Vice President for Operations

If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
 Regional Director

(PDI - Dec. 6, 2006)

DepEd -
MARIKINA CITY
 OSEC DECSB ESP3-
 30109 ESP2-30121
 ESP1-30278
 MTCHRI-30034
 TCH2-36184

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 Agencia de Makati
 Tel# 889-7956

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & COMMUNICATIONS **LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE** East Avenue, Quezon City E-mail Address: ltrnmbx@lto.gov.ph • Website: www.lto.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

- Procurement of Multimedia Equipment/Devices for the use of Bulwagang Edu
- CY 2007 Security Service Covering the Period from January 1 to December 31, 2007

The Land Transportation Office, through MVUC Fund (Fund 151) and General Fund (Fund 101) intends to apply the following Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) of payment for the aforesaid procurement, to wit:

Procurement of Multimedia Equipment/Devices for the use of Bulwagang Edu	Php 2,166,646.00
CY 2007 Security Service Covering the Period from January 1 to December 31, 2007	Php 12,767,322.88

Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

The Land Transportation Office now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the items. The required delivery schedule will be indicated in the approved Contract. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the BAC Sub-Committee and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of P10,000.00 for Security Service and P1,000.00 for the procurement of Multimedia Equipment/Devices, in the form of cash. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

The Land Transportation Office will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on December 12, 2006 at 10:00 a.m. for the procurement of Multimedia Equipment/Devices and at 2:00 p.m. for CY 2007 Security Service covering the period from January 1 to December 31, 2007. All bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in any of the following form:

Form of Security	Minimum Amount in % of Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid
1. Cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit	One Percent (1%)
2. Bank guarantee	One and a half Percent (1.5%)
3. Surety Bond	Two and a half Percent (2.5%)
4. Foreign government guarantee	One hundred percent (100%)

Late Bids shall not be accepted. Bid opening shall be on December 27, 2006 at 10:00 a.m. for the procurement of multimedia equipment/devices and at 2:00 p.m. for CY 2007 Security Service covering the period from January 1 to December 31, 2007 at the LTO Library, East Avenue, Quezon City.

Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

The Land Transportation Office reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Land Transportation Office
 Atty. Jimmy G. Pesigan - Chairman, BAC
 East Avenue, Quezon City
 (02) 9219077 - Telefax

(Sgd.) ATTY. JIMMY G. PESIGAN
 BAC - Chairman

(PDI - Dec. 6, 2006)

National Irrigation Administration Region VI, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City

Contract Ref. No. NIAR-RADP-ARIS-CW02-05
 Name of the Contract: Construction of Settling Basin with Silt Ejector of Aganan RIS
 Location of the Contract: San Miguel, Iloilo

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Irrigation Administration, Region VI, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for Eligibility and to bid for the hereunder Contract.

Name of Contract	Construction of Settling Basin with Silt Ejector of Aganan RIS
Location	San Miguel, Iloilo
Brief Description	Excavation (Manual & Mech.) 14,631cu m.; Concrete Demolition 250cu m.; 3,000ps Concrete 1,351cu m.; RSB 74,128kgs; Fill/Backfill (Manual & Mech.) 9,780cu m. and others

Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	Php 14,876,467.89
Contract Duration	116 Calendar Days

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and have key personnel and equipment listed in the Eligibility Forms available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC will use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC will conduct Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The schedule of BAC activities is as follows:

BAC Activities	Time	Date	Venue
1. Receipt from prospective Bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) indicating Application for Eligibility	10:15 A.M.	11-28-06	NIA R6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms		11-28-06	NIA R6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City
3. Receipt of Eligibility Requirements (deadline)		12-11-06	NIA R6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City
4. Notice of Results of Eligibility Check		12-13-06	NIA R6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City
5. Issuance of Bid Documents		12-13-06	NIA R6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City
6. Pre-bid Conference	10:15 A.M.	12-19-06	Conference Room, NIA Reg. 6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City
7. Receipt and Opening of Bids	10:15 A.M.	12-27-06	Conference Room, NIA Reg. 6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms at the National Irrigation Regional Office 6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City, upon submission of Letter of Intent (LOI) and upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P500.00 to the NIA Region VI Cashier. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to the BAC at the same address. They may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check by the BAC at the same address.

The BAC will issue Bidding Documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible for the bidding upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P2,500.00 to the National Irrigation Administration Region VI Cashier.

The National Irrigation Administration assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

The National Irrigation Administration reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Approved:
 (Sgd.) ELSEO R. CARREON, CSEE
 BAC Vice-Chairman

(PDI - Nov. 29 & Dec. 6, 2006)

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Maynila, Pilipinas **BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE**

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/contractors bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project/Brief Description	One (1) lot supply and installation of ten (10) units Grinder Sewage Ejector Pumps per BSP Scope of Work and Specifications
Approved Budget for the Contract	P 3,950,000.00
Delivery Period	Within ninety (90) calendar days after receipt of Purchase Order

Prospective bidders should have undertaken a similar project within the last five (5) years with an amount of at least 50% of the Approved Budget for the Contract. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	6 December 2006 - 4 January 2007
2. Pre-Bidding Conference	5 January 2007 10:00 a.m.
3. Opening of Bids	23 January 2007 2:00 p.m.
4. Bid Evaluation	These shall be in accordance with the prescribed periods allowed in the Implementing Rules & Regulations (IRR)-A
5. Post-qualification	of R.A. No. 9184 dated 10 January 2003
6. Notice of Award	

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P1,975.00 to the BSP Cashier.

The BSP assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

The BSP reserves the right to reject any and all bid proposals, or declare the bidding a failure, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) JUAN DE ZUÑIGA, JR.
 Chairman

(PDI - Dec. 6, 2006)

BANK ACQUIRED ASSET FOR SALE

Location: Nos. 1765 & 1767 Nicanor Garcia St., San Miguel Village, Makati City
 Description: 2 Unit Commercial Building
 Total Area: 633 sqms. more or less
 Indicative Selling Price: P14,808,400.00

- * property is sold on an "as is where is" basis*
- * subject to bank's evaluation and approval
- * subject to change without prior notice to the public*

For inquiries, please call:
UNITED COCONUT PLANTERS BANK
 Asset Management and Disposition Division
 Hotline No. 8119797



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES **SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM** East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City Tel. Nos. (632) 920-6401 / (632) 920-6446 E-mail: member_relations@sss.gov.ph / Web site: http://www.sss.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID IAEB No. 2006-048 - Goods

SSS Ee's Rice Grant for the 1st Quarter CY2007
 Brief description of the Project

	Degree of Milling	Moisture Content	Grade Specifications	Well Milled Rice (WMR)	14% (maximum)	Headrice - 90% to 95% (minimum)	Broken - 10% to 5% (maximum)	50 kilos in light yellow woven polypropylene	With front & back markings	7,434 sacks
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Lot No.	Area Covered	No. of Eas	Quantity	Total Cost
I	Quezon City (excluding Lot II)	525	1,575 sacks	P 2,362,500.00
II	Fairview/Novaliches O.C.	672	2,016 sacks	3,024,000.00
III	San Mateo/Montalban/Marikina Pasig/Anipolo/Taguig/Pateros Rizal/Makati/Parañaque/Baclaran Pasay/Muntinlupa/Las Piñas Cavite/Laguna	661	2,043 sacks	3,064,500.00
IV	Bulacan/Pampanga/Malabon Malolos/Calocan/Manila Mandaluyong/San Juan	600	1,800 sacks	2,700,000.00

- The SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM, through the Operating Expense-Rice Grant intends to apply the sum of P11,151,000.00 (P11,500,000/sack) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the supply and door-to-door delivery of approximately 7,434 sacks of Freshly Milled Premium Grade Commercial Rice for SSS employees for the first quarter of Year 2007. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
- The SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the supply and door-to-door delivery of approximately 7,434 sacks of Freshly Milled Premium Grade Commercial Rice. Supply and door-to-door delivery of the GOODS is required within thirty (30) calendar days after contract signing/receipt of purchase order. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, Instruction to Bidders (ITB).
- Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section I of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure on a per lot basis.
- Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8 AM TO 5 PM.
- A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee based on the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)

Lot No.	Amount of Bid Tender Documents
I	P 2,500.00
II	P 2,500.00
III	P 2,500.00
IV	P 2,500.00

If the bidder opted to participate in more than one (1) lot, the bidder shall pay corresponding to the total cost of the bidding documents for all the lots it intended to participate.

The method of payment will be on a cash basis/manager's check payable to SSS to be paid at the SSS Cashiering Department, SSS Main Bldg. Ground floor, upon accomplishment of SSS Form R-6. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

- The SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on December 18, 2006 at 2:00 p.m., Green Room, 12th Floor, SSS Main Bldg., East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City.
- Bids and eligibility requirements must be submitted at the Green Room, 12th Floor, SSS Main Building on January 08, 2007 not later than 2:00 p.m.. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in a form and amount indicated in the Bid Tender Documents. Late Bids shall not be accepted.
- Bid opening shall be on January 08, 2007 at 2:00 p.m., Green Room, 12th Floor, SSS Main Bldg., East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address given.
- The SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Bid and Awards Committee
 The Secretariat
 6th Floor, SSS Main Building
 East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
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(Sgd.) THE CHAIRMAN
 BIDS & AWARDS COMMITTEE

(PDI - Dec. 6, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines Office of the President **HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT COORDINATING COUNCIL**

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC) hereby invites all interested parties to participate in the bidding for the supply and delivery of the hereunder equipment and motor vehicles:

- Two (2) units Motor Vehicles
- Thirty Nine (39) sets Computers
- Seventeen (17) units Laserjet Printers
- Nine (9) units Fax Machines
- Five (5) units Deskjet Printers

Prospective bidders shall be pre-qualified upon submission of pertinent documents indicated in the Guidelines on Eligibility and to Bid. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

This invitation for Eligibility and to Bid shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of Republic Act (RA) 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

Bid documents and minimum specifications of equipment being offered for bidding will be ready for issuance effective December 6, 2006 at the General Services Division (GSD) of HUDCC, 6/F, Atrium Building, Makati Avenue, City of Makati.

Sealed bids shall be received by the Chairman, Bids and Award Committee (BAC) during the opening of the bids which will be held on December 28, 2006 at 10:00 a.m. at the HUDCC Conference Room. The bid proposal should be properly addressed to:

THE CHAIRMAN, BAC
 6/F, Atrium Building, Makati Avenue,
 City of Makati

The HUDCC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for good cause not specifically mentioned herein. Likewise, the HUDCC reserves the right to conduct another bidding, when such will not unduly prejudice qualified bidders.

(Sgd.) ASSEC. PAMELA F. YABUT
 Deputy Secretary General &
 Chairman, BAC

(PDI - Dec. 6, 2006)

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Banks' exposure in real estate sector up 2.2%

Drug price scheme questioned

LOCAL PHARMACEUTICAL FIRM Therapharma recently questioned a price discount scheme launched by rival Pfizer Philippines Inc. for its anti-hypertension drug.

In a statement, the company said the scheme appeared to be a "marketing ploy to preempt the introduction of a more affordable competing brand."

Therapharma said there was "a perception that the 50-percent discount offering of Pfizer was only a temporary marketing scheme to project its anti-hypertensive product as cheaper by 50 percent."

"This perception was triggered by Pfizer's unprecedented 20 percent price increase prior to implementing the discount program," Therapharma said in the statement.

The local pharmaceutical firm launched last month an anti-hypertensive drug called Amvasc, whose price was 60 percent lower than that of the competing drug.

"If Pfizer is sincere in its desire to bring down the cost of its product to benefit a greater number of patients permanently, a direct and actual price roll back should have already been done by the company," it added.

The government earlier urged the Philippine pharmaceutical and healthcare sectors to help provide the public with "quality medicines at affordable prices" in order to help lower the incidence of the leading causes of death in the country.

In a press briefing, Dr. Esperanza Cabral, social welfare and development secretary, said heart and vascular diseases continue to top the list of the 10 leading causes of mortality in the country. She expressed concern over trends which show that some 17.4 percent of the total population could be afflicted with hypertension.

Expected construction boom to fuel growth

By Doris C. Dumlaog

THE COMMERCIAL BANKING industry's exposure in the real estate sector rose by 2.2 percent as of end-September to hit P214.8 billion from the level in June, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported yesterday.

New real estate loans and investments in securities issued by real estate companies from July to September amounted to P2.2 billion and P2.4 billion, respectively.

Compared to year-ago level, the banks' real estate lending and investments as of end-September this year expanded by 4.8 percent versus the comparative level of P205 billion.

The industry's real estate lending, alone, expanded by 1.1 percent to P195.6 billion. This resulted in a slightly higher ratio of real estate

loans to total outstanding loans in the third quarter to 11.8 percent from the previous quarter's 11.7 percent. This ratio was however slightly lower than year-ago's 11.9 percent.

The bank proper accounted for 97.4 percent of total real estate loans while the banks' trust departments took the remaining 2.6 percent.

Real estate loans used for the development of properties for commercial purposes, including infrastructure projects, accounted for P162.4 billion or 83 percent of the banking system's total real estate loans.

The remaining P33.2 billion or 17 percent went to individual borrowers.

The banks' past due real estate loans in the third quarter rose by 5.8 percent to P27.3 billion from the previous quarter's P25.8 billion. This pushed the ratio of past

due loans to total real estate loans to 13.9 percent from the previous quarter's 13.3 percent.

The booming property sector, fueled by inflows from overseas Filipinos and the growing popularity of condominium living, is seen replacing the maturing telecommunication counter as the new darling of investors in the Philippines.

Deutsche Bank, in an earlier Philippine strategy research paper, said that while mobile phones had boxed out all other items in the stagnant local household budget in the last five years, first-time home buying may be becoming the "new thing" in this country.

In 2003, low vacancies in the residential and office markets began to push yields up and a year after, expansion began in earnest in the residential sector.

Sear unveils expansion plans

By Riza T. Olchondra

FORMER PHILIPPINE AIRLINES president Avelino L. Zapanta has come out of retirement to become the chief executive officer of South East Asian Airlines (Seair) and help the budget carrier become a major player in the local airline industry.

Seair officials said Zapanta, who retired in 2004, had led the flag carrier to unprecedented profitability and that he could work the same magic for Seair.

"I believe that my appointment to this position comes at the right time as Seair faces new challenges with its growth and expansion," Zapanta said in a media briefing.

The Clark-based airline is expecting revenue to hit P1 billion this year, up from P600 million in 2005.

Aside from growing the

local business, Zapanta intends to lead the airline's regional expansion, with Singapore and Macau as the initial targets.

Seair has signed a contract with Singapore's low-fare airline Tiger Airways to promote Philippine travel and tourism, and boost Seair's regional market presence.

Locally, expansion would be pushed by adding Clark-Cebu and Clark-Davao flights to Seair's 18 routes serving 14 local tourist destinations.

To cope with expansion, Zapanta said Seair would bring in two A320 Airbus planes by the first quarter of 2007.

The 180-seaters will be deployed in domestic and regional routes as soon as the Civil Aeronautics Board grants the necessary regulatory approvals, Zapanta said.

Peso seen to stay strong in '07

BRITISH BANKING GIANT HSBC IS BULLISH on Philippine peso and sovereign bonds given recent strides in the government's fiscal consolidation and the favorable impact of the prospective easing of key interest rates in the United States.

In a press briefing yesterday, HSBC country treasurer Jose Arnulfo Veloso said the peso would likely stabilize at 49.25-49.50 by the end of this year and to further appreciate to 47-48 against the US dollar by next year.

Veloso said the sustained influx of remittances from overseas Filipino workers would likely keep the peso strong versus the greenback, but noted that the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas would likely come in to "manage" the volatility.

He said the BSP would likely siphon off the dollars in the system and retire more foreign debts ahead of maturity.

"Overseas remittances, political stability and continued fiscal discipline with set the direction for the peso," Veloso said.

He noted that the peso's appreciation was also in line with the strengthening of other currencies against the weakening US dollar. For instance, the Chinese renminbi was seen rising to 7.55 next year from 7.85 against the US dollar this year.

HSBC also believes that the US Federal Re-

serves rate, the direction of which has driven offshore investors out of emerging markets early this year, had already peaked at its current level of 5.25 percent and would likely be slashed to 4 percent next year. It expects a quarter of a percent cut each in May, June, August, September and October next year.

Lower yields in the world's largest economy usually encourage investors to scout for investment opportunities in emerging markets.

"And among emerging markets, they will look for markets with good stories to tell, and the Philippines has a good story to tell," Veloso said, noting that the government has made progress in keeping fiscal deficits at bay.

As such, he noted that credit default swaps of the Philippine foreign currency bonds or ROPs were now at all-time low levels of 129 basis points from a high of 484 in January 2005.

CDS, an instrument usually offered by banks, is a security against losses in case of a borrower's default. Its pricing thus reflects the market's confidence on an issuer's creditworthiness.

"This is only second best to Brazil's (CDS of) 116," Veloso said.

Aside from Brazil, other sovereign issuers with a similar BB credit rating were trading with a higher CDS, such as Indonesia (125), Turkey (185) and Venezuela (158). **Doris C. Dumlaog**

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IPO glory days

From page B4

1990s," he added.

Data from the PSE showed that in 1994, the stock market saw IPO activity peak with 21 companies listed on the stock market. These included SM Prime Holdings, Megaworld Properties and Holdings Inc., Universal Robina Corp., Petron Corp., Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Cosmos Bottling Corp. and Cebu Holdings.

Some P37.4 billion was raised in that year. Over the years, the value dwindled to a low of P186.14 million in 2003 with only four companies braving the stock market.

With the economy taking a positive turn, the market started to flourish again in 2005, when companies raised a total of P33.5 billion. This year turns out better with P51.6 billion already raised through the exchange.

"Investor bullishness is evident in the overwhelming performance of Alliance Tuna International, the latest IPO. On listing day, the issue opened and eventually closed 50 percent up from its IPO price of P1.35," Balita said.

Since 2005, the stock market

has seen major names joining its roster, including SM Investments Corp., Manila Water Company Inc., First Gen Corp., Citiseconline.Com and Alliance Tuna International.

Investment bankers are betting that 2006 will finish with a bang, with the most awaited IPO of the year, that of geothermal power producer PNOC-Energy Development Corp.

Investors have been unloading their holdings in the last few days in preparation for PNOC-EDC's maiden offer on Dec. 13, touted as the largest this year.

But, is the market ready to absorb all these IPOs?

"The fact that most of the IPOs and follow on offers are oversubscribed is proof that the market can absorb these offerings," an analyst of a foreign brokerage said.

"The trend in the market doesn't look like it will reverse. Next year is an election year which is good for the economy because consumer spending will increase," Joseph Roxas, president at Eagle Equities Inc., said.

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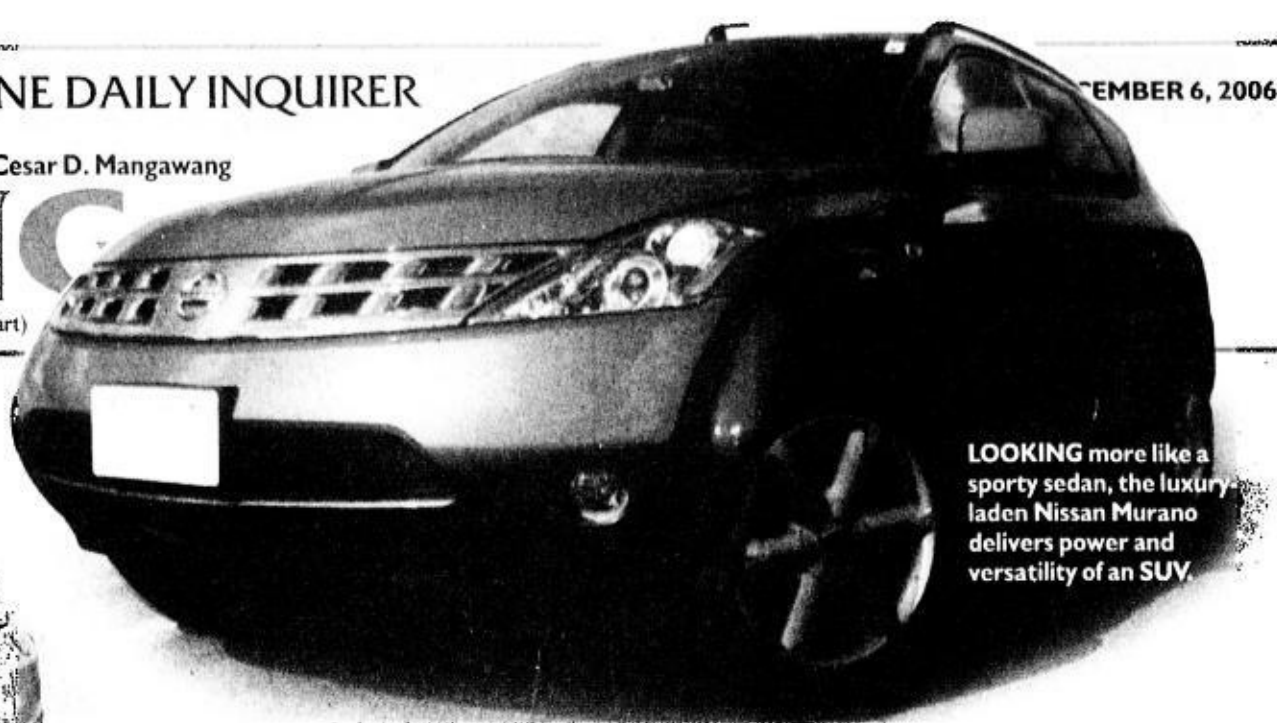
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THE TURBOCHARGED
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delivers power and
versatility of an SUV.

ENTICING DISCERNING CAR BUYERS

Nissan, Subaru break the SUV mold

Text and photos by Charles E. Buban

A LOT OF VEHICLES TODAY toe the line between a car and a sport utility vehicle, yet a few walk right down the middle, the way the Nissan Murano and the Subaru Forester do.

Drive these two so-called "crossovers" and you'll discover that, despite their SUV-like profile, they have the soul of a car—and a pretty sporty one at that.

Indeed, the Murano and the Forester break the mold because unlike traditional SUVs that are built off a truck platform (body and frame built as separate structures), these two are built like cars in which the body and frame are the same thing so they weigh less and ride low to the ground, like a car.

The result is that while the Murano and Forester offer SUV-like convenience (versatile cargo-carrying space, higher driving position, modest amount of towing capacity), they also offer a more comfortable ride, better handling, stable and less prone to rollovers and best of all, deliver surprising fuel economy.

Puzzling

Take for example the Murano. At first glance, this crossover is a bit of a puzzle. Despite being in the market since April, this writer (who took it recently out of town) still got numerous sidelong stares from other drivers who were probably trying to figure out just what that was in the next lane.

Indeed, the Murano is kind of an automotive amalgam, designed to look like an SUV on the bottom and a sports sedan on the top—while it sports huge 18-inch wheels and muscular, flared fenders, they're topped by a roofline that is petite by comparison.

While it is stylishly designed like a sports car with its prominent stylized front grille, upswept D-pillars, a sloping hoodline and steeply raked windshield, the Murano is powered by a muscular 240-horsepower, 3.5-liter V6 engine under the hood.

"Murano's radical design is a real head turner. It includes much of Nissan's recent design language. The trapezoidal head and tail lamps echo those found on our 350Z sports car. Another distinctive styling cue is the shape of the rearmost side window, which is triangular and has a sharply upswept lower edge," described Raymond Tribidino, Nissan Motor Philippines senior manager for market and product planning.

No different

The Forester is another interesting crossover. While the 2.5 XT (turbocharged) variant this writer recently drove may look like an unassuming wagon/SUV crossover, it performs like a sports sedan—nimble and zippy on road and is able to blow away vehicles between stoplights.

Powered by a 2.5-liter turbocharged four-cylinder engine—the same one that powers the iconic Subaru Impreza WRX—the Forester 2.5 XT generates a hefty 227 hp, that could catapult its 1,510-kg body, from 0 to 100 kph, in just over 6 seconds!

The Forester 2.5 XT, like every Subaru vehicle, also breaks tradition by using a boxer engine (called "boxers" because the pistons repeatedly punch outward), also known as a horizontally opposed engine.

Besides Subaru, only Porsche uses this engine architecture, which is known for providing good power in a compact package, and a low block-height that helps lower the center of mass in the car (ensures stable ride and instills confidence when doing quick turns).

Perfecting the design

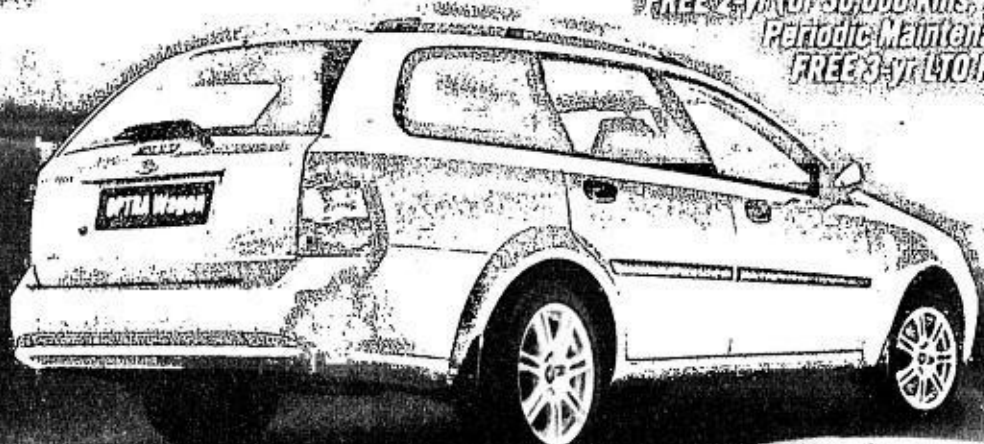
"Subaru has perfected this design. And like the rest of Subaru models, the Forester has increased stability through turns, superior control and less susceptibility to body roll when cornering. These are all part of Subaru's com-

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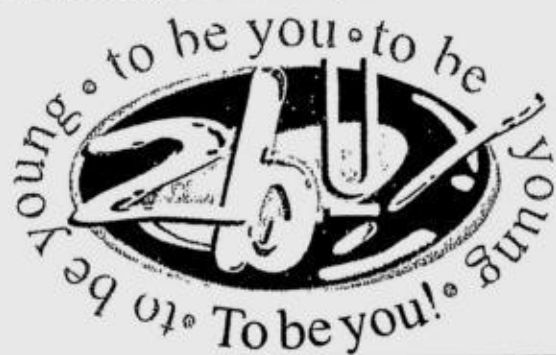
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Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

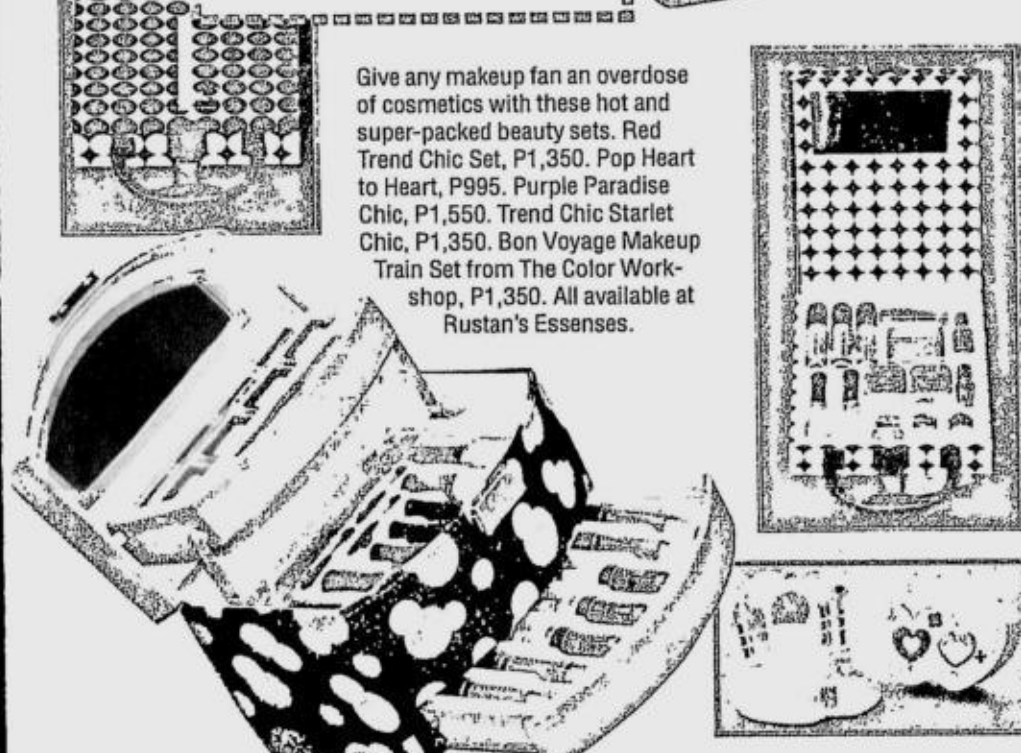
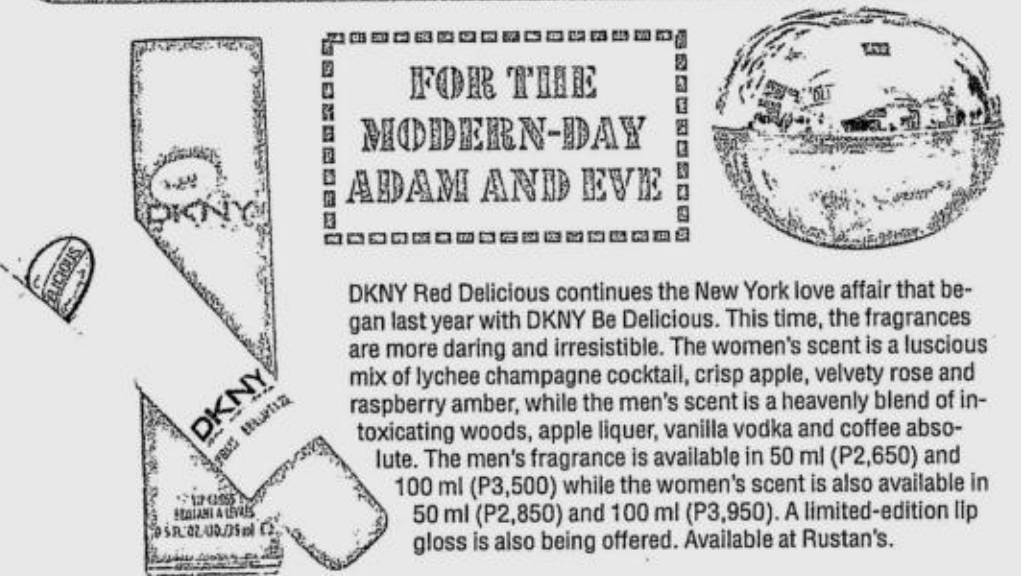
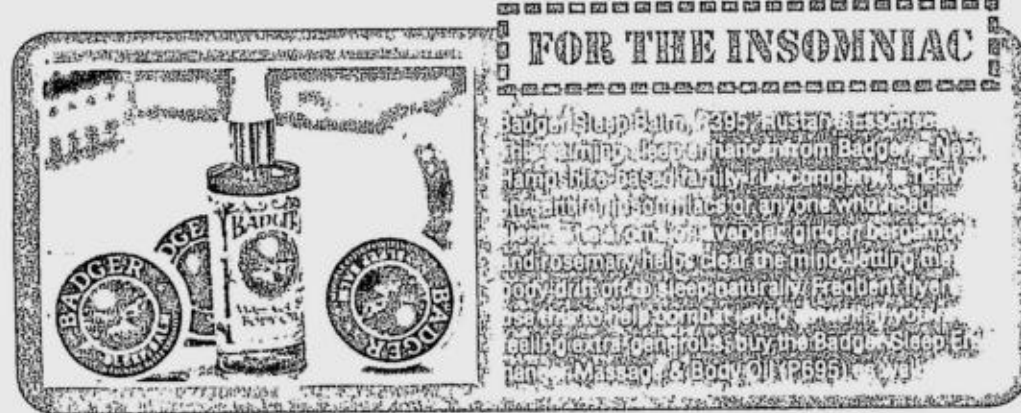
Chief of Correspondents Pam Pastor

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Christmas CATALOGUE 2006

Part 1

We all know Christmas is more than just exchanging gifts. But buying and wrapping presents to give away has become such a part of this season that we just can't ignore it. And with endless traffic and throngs of people jostling for shopping space, it can become a stressful Christmas for you. So we at 2bU! have decided to make things a little easier. We went around the malls—and even cyberspace—and tried to find memorable gifts that we're guessing you'd find on your loved ones' lists. Think of us as your personal Christmas shoppers. And we're not done yet. We have more gift ideas for you next week!



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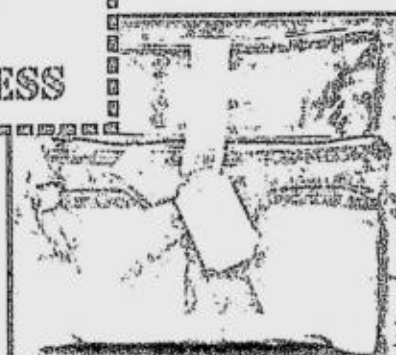
FOR THE PINUP-GIRL WANNABE



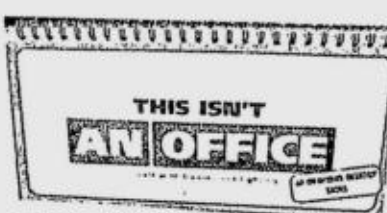
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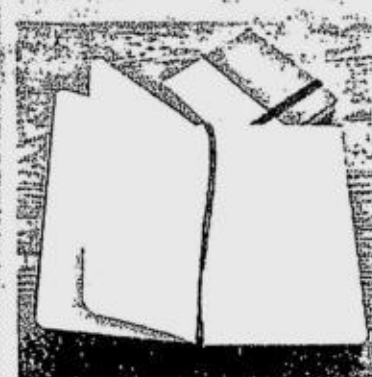
Set of three pink pouches, P395. Available at Rustan's Essences.



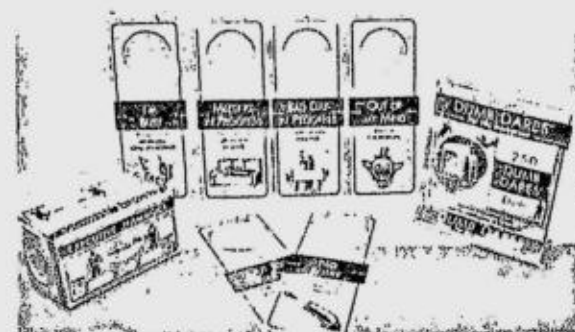
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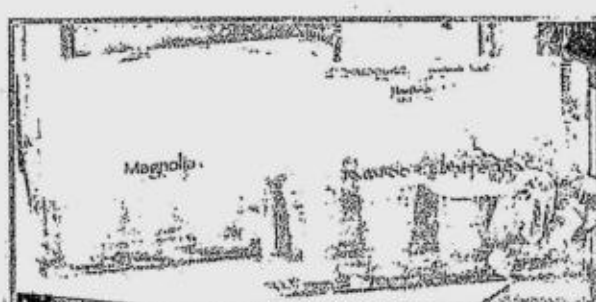
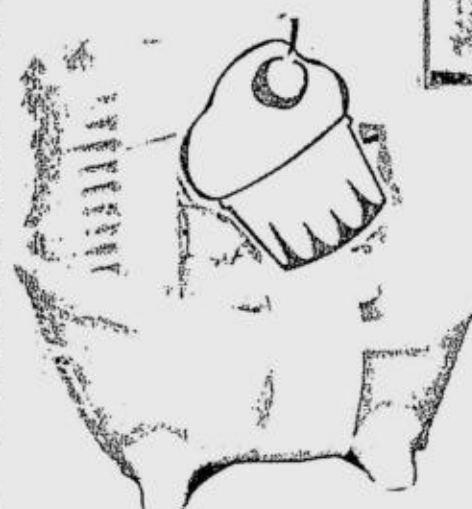
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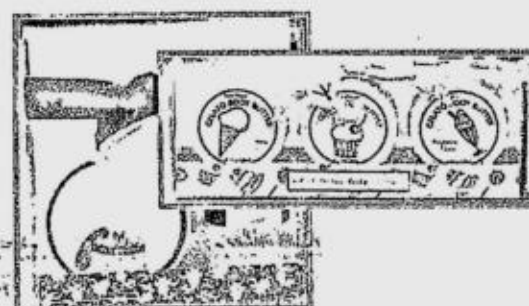
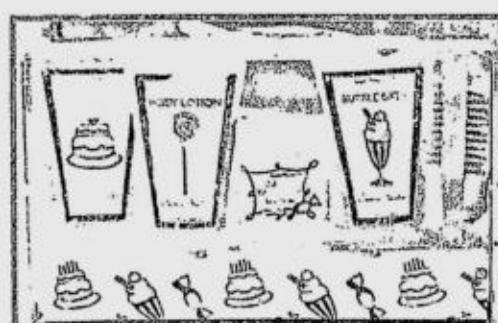
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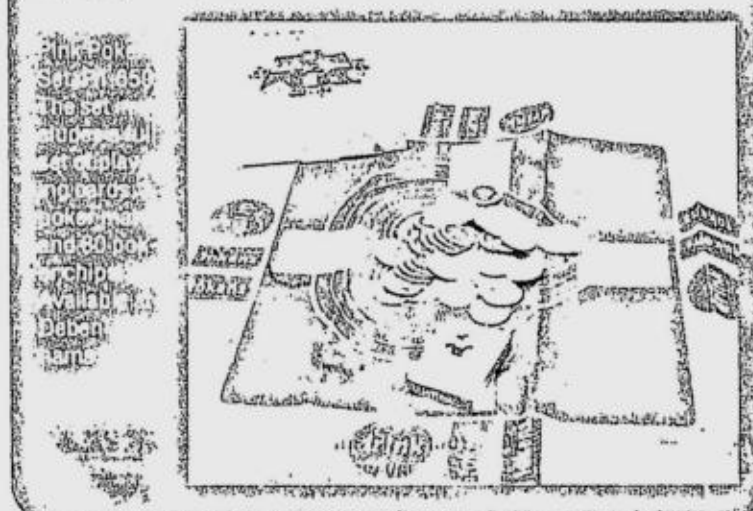
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FOR THE WOMAN WHO WANTS TO STAND OUT



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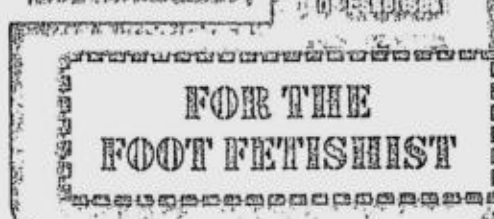
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FOR THE FOOT FETISHIST



FOR THE FRAGRANCE COLLECTOR



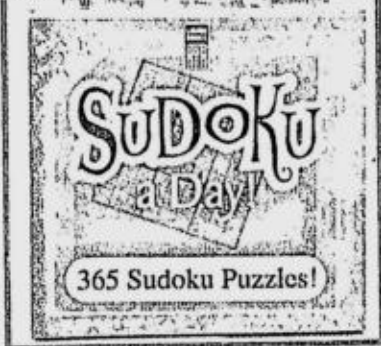
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FOR THE PARTY CHRONICLER

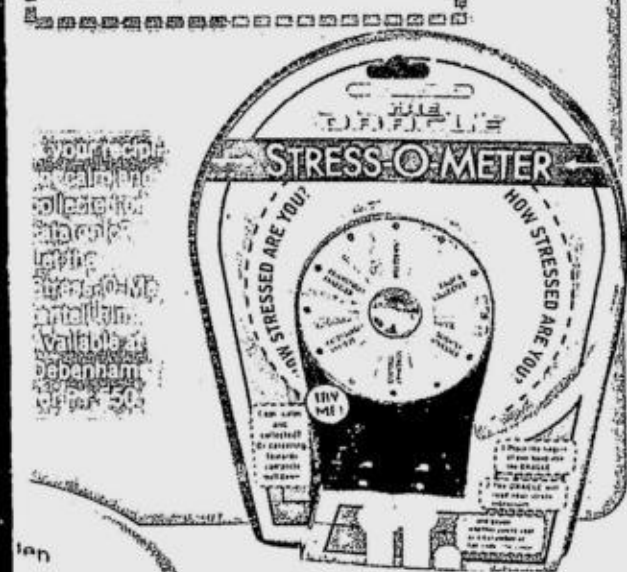


Handbag notebook, P395, Debenhams. Your recipient will get away with jotting notes at a party by carrying a notebook that looks like a purse.

FOR THE SPEED FREAK



FOR THE STRESS-PLAGUED

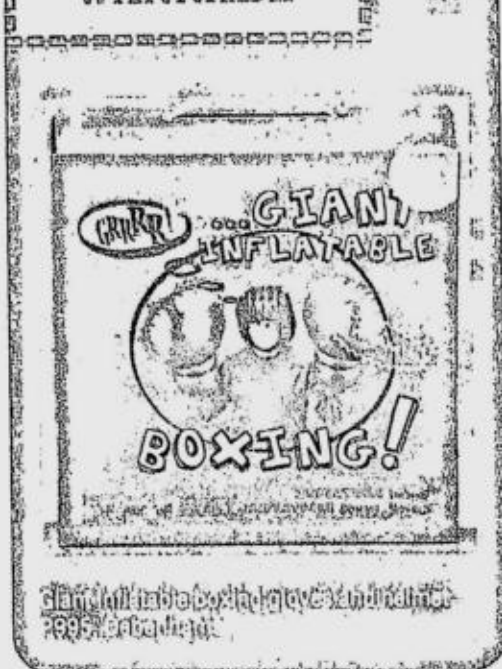


FOR THE SINGLE AND HAPPY

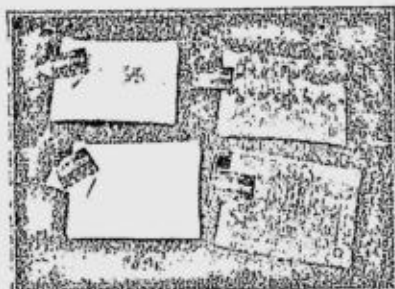


...and loving it, get her/him a Singelringen. Brought to the Philippines by Schu, Singelringen is a unisex sterling silver ring with a unique design. It was created as the single person's ring and engagement rings, a way to announce one's independence and a unique seven-digit code that you can use to log onto the Singelringen website (www.singelringen.com) and connect to the global Singelringen community. Singelringen is available in Schu in Glorietta 3, Beauty Bar in Podium. Each ring is P2,450.

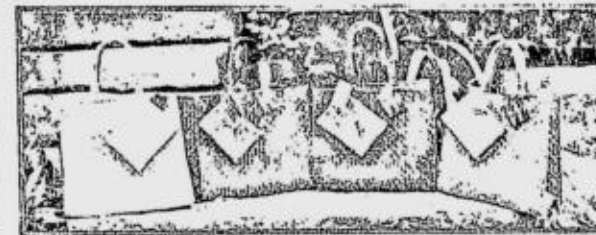
FOR THE PACQUIAO WANNABE



FOR THE PINOY AND PROUD



Yabang Pinoy, the campaign that aims to push Pinoy Pride, has come out with merchandise it calls "objects of conversation" that stress the importance of speaking about and being proud to be Filipino. There are bracelets (P50 each), bayongs (P550-P750), utility pouches (P300) and bookmark sets (P90). To order, visit www.yabang-pinoy.com or e-mail yabang-pinoy@gmail.com.



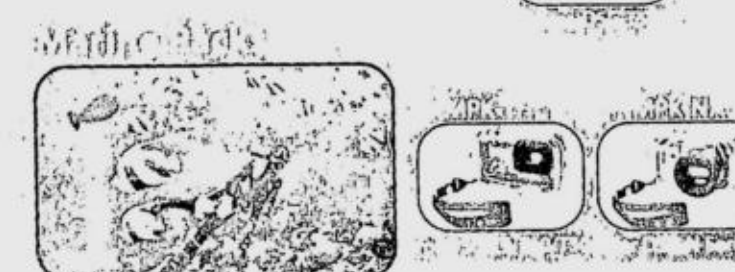
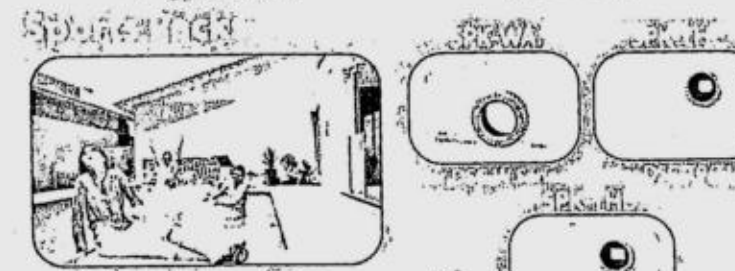
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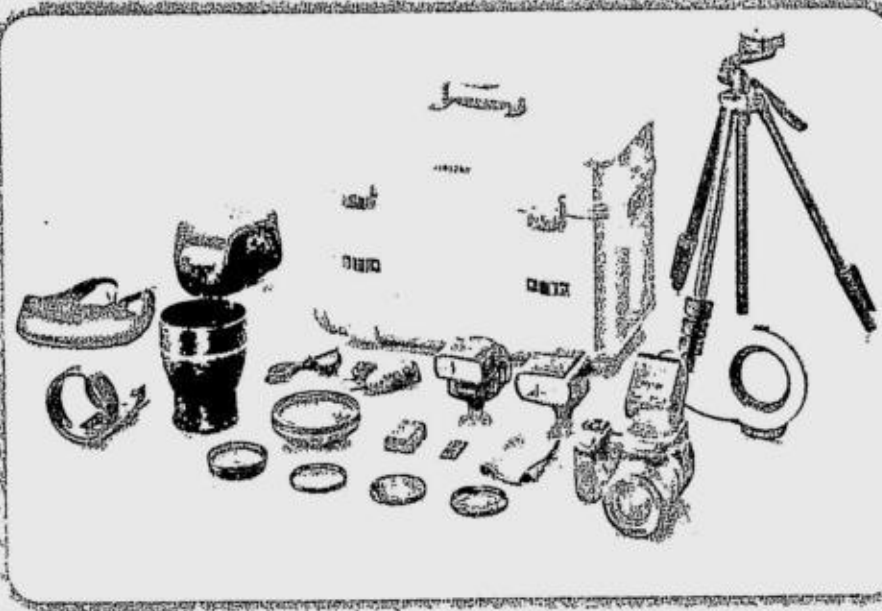


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Sony Digital Imaging Accessories

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SONY

Christmas Treasures

Promo period: November 10, 2006 to January 15, 2007

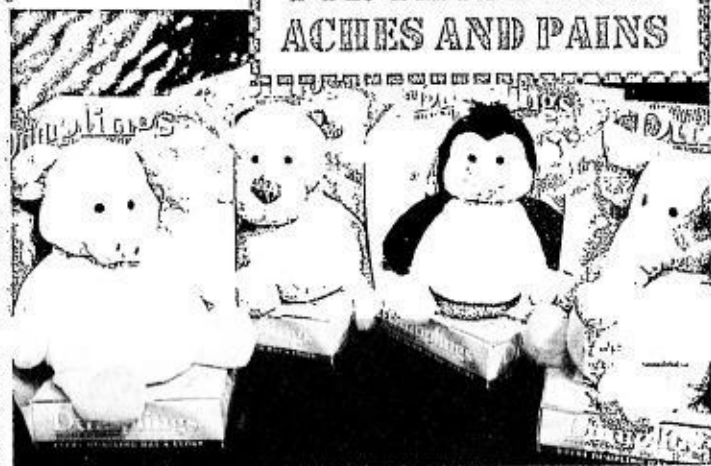
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2006

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 4098 Series of 2006

Gift Guide

FOR THOSE WITH ACHES AND PAINS



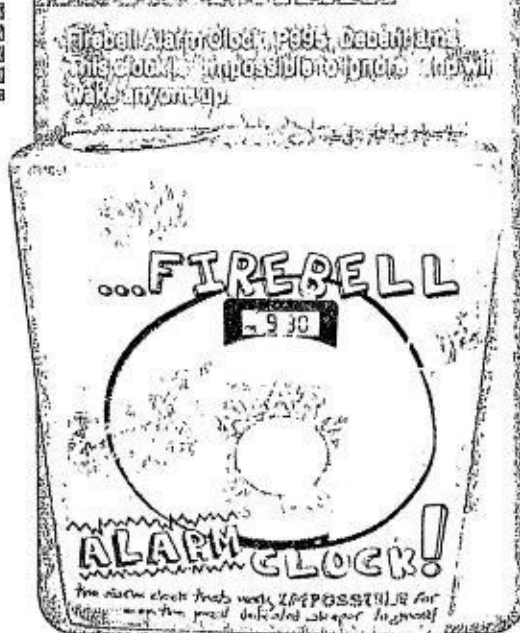
The Dumplings Microwaveable Heat Pack, P995, Debenhams. These adorable stuffed toys are not just that. Your recipient can pop them in the microwave to take the place of his or her good old hot water bottle. Pig, penguin, elephant or bear—take your pick.

FOR THE SHOWER SINGER



"Singing in the shower just got funkier," the packaging says. This Disco Shower Radio from Pink Inc. promises to be splash-proof and a whole lot of fun. P895, available at Debenhams. Batteries not included.

FOR THE DEDICATED SLEEPER



FOR DRUMMING DREAMERS



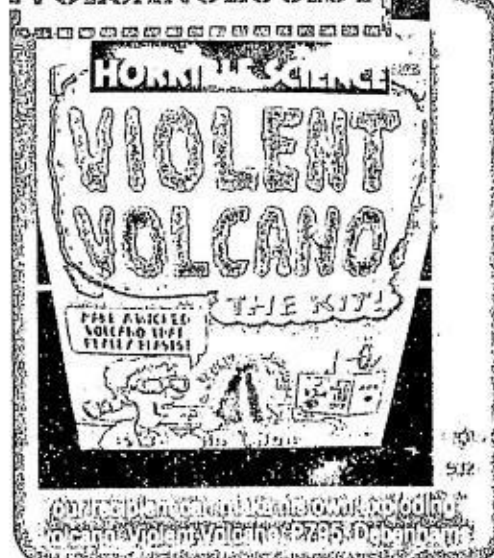
Set your recipient's rhythm loose with this tabletop electric drum set. Finger Drums, P1,150, available at Debenhams.

FOR SECRET STASHERS



Mini Locker, P1,150, Debenhams

FOR THE FRUSTRATED VOLCANOLOGIST



FOR THE BELIEVER



The Oracle Fortune Teller, P1,350, Debenhams. This machine says, "Ask me anything, I have all the answers."

FOR THE ETERNAL GOLFER



Bottle Caddy, P1,250, Debenhams. This set includes three golf balls, 50 wooden tees, a golf towel, a drinks bottle, a ball marker and pitch mark repairer.

FOR THE OBSESSIVE- COMPULSIVE GEEK



Computer Vac, P895

The promise of protection.*
The beating of a healthy heart.**
The minerals of VIVA!

VIVA! is good for your body.

a product of The Coca-Cola Company

*Water is an essential source of minerals. **Drinking Water is Heart-Healthy

This Christmas, you can never go wrong with iPod and personal tech accessories

BELKIN
TuneDok

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 4366, Series of 2006

para malaman kung paano magka-bonus.

DAHIL
SMART
TAYO

Holiday goodies

By Zee Castro
2bU! Correspondent

Spread Christmas cheer by giving your loved ones some yummy treats!

Great as contributions for a potluck *merienda* reunion or perfect for snacking come Christmas Day

Dips by Kitchen Witch. Flavors available are Tomato Stunner, Ham and Gruyere, Edam, Cucumber Yogurt, Creamy Tomato. Visit Sel de Terre Kitchen at 15 Green Hill St. Rolling Hills Village, New Manila, QC. Call 0917-8333793 or 7242923)
Egg Tarts, P120 per box of six, and P 200 per box of 12; Gourmet Empanadas, available in Traditional, Chicken Pesto and Seafood Special flavors at P110 per box of six and P200 per box of 12. Order from Sweet Thang. Call 0916-2702063 or 259 4258. E-mail sweet-thangkitchen@yahoo.com.

These small-portioned treat are great as personal gifts!

Top: Glazed Banana Cake in fabric-covered box, P445. Order from Mom and Tina's (tel. 9140833). Black Forest, Kahlua Mousse, Sugar-Free Mango Cheesecake, Nelusko Cake Singles by M Cakes. Other flavors available. Text or call 0917-8550171.

Bottom: The hottest cupcakes in town are all dressed up for the Christmas season! Peppermint Patty, Vanilla, Red Velvet Vixen, Snowman Cupcakes, P50-P80 per piece. Order from Cupcakes by Sonja, 1/L, Serendra Retail Area, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig.

FOR THE MEMORY KEEPER



Preserve your favorite memories and share them with your loved ones with the help of Click! Visit www.justclickphotos.com and get ready to create personalized photo books with glossy pages and gorgeous covers in cloth, leather or suede. Themes and layouts are customizable, too.

Maria Miniano, 2bU! Correspondent

FOR THE PET LOVER

Doggone Christmas

Your doggie will look even more adorable in this cute Santa suit! Order from Fab Pups, Dog Apparel for Fabulous Pups. Call 0916-2702063 or 0916-2012585, visit <http://fabpups.multiply.com>!

Zee Castro



ZEE CASTRO

FOR THE WHOLE 'BARKADA'



PHOTOS BY ZEE CASTRO

Perfect as barkada gifts!

Lucky Luca's Perfume balms and Lip Salves come in cute packaging with clever names! Kindness Can Save the World has a light and refreshing chamomile scent! Try Smile at a Stranger for a sheer berry flush. Perfume Balms, P240. Lip Salve, P190. Visit www.luckyluca.com. Part of Lucky Luca proceeds are donated to Unicef, while another part is solely dedicated to fund humble outreach programs in less fortunate communities.

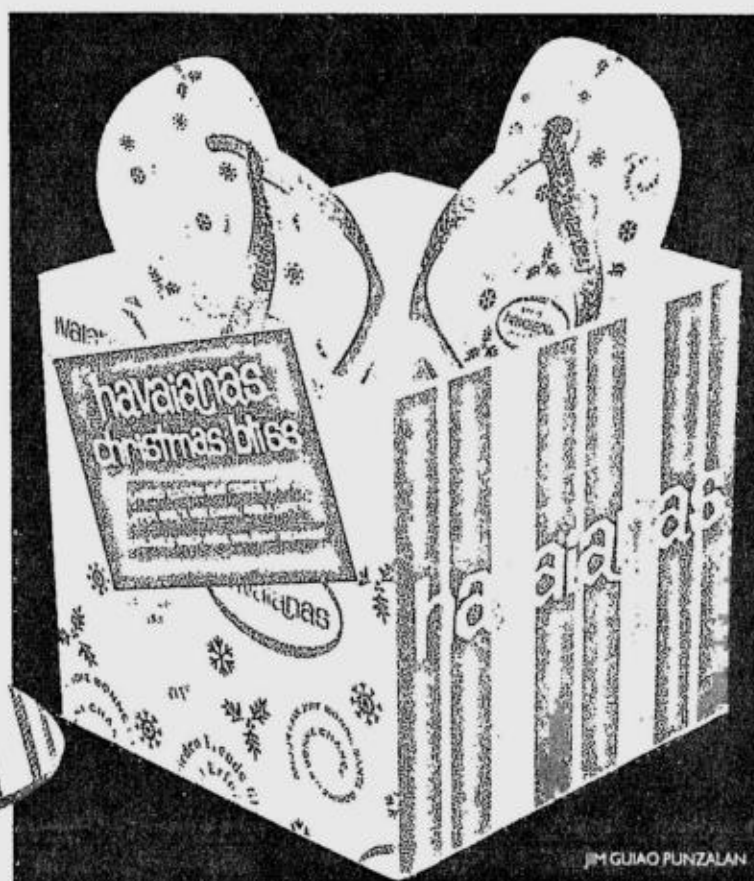
Zee Castro

2bU! GIFT GUIDE

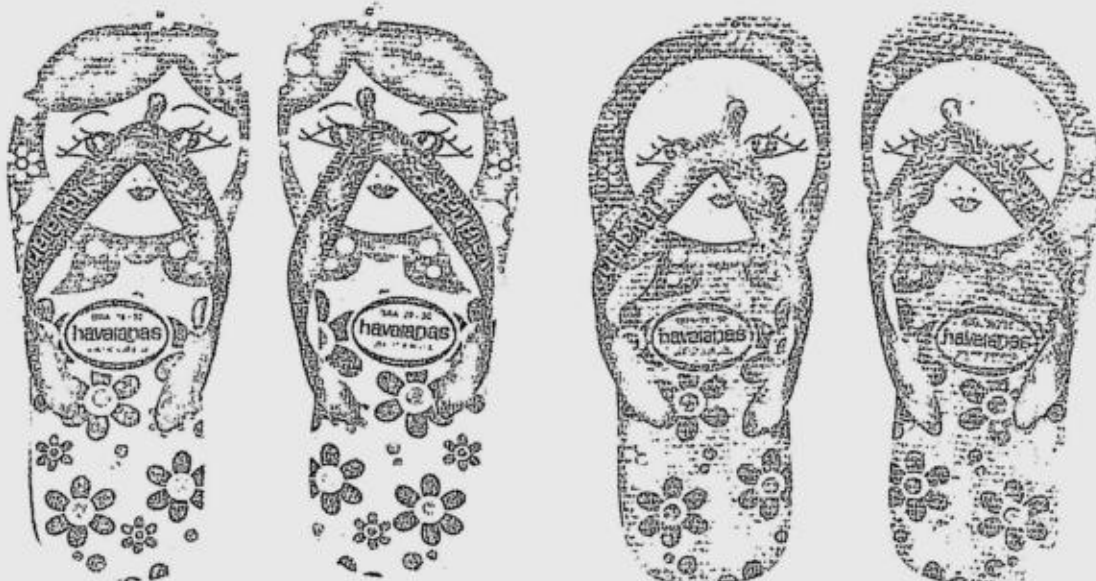
FOR THE FLIP-FLOP FANATIC

Christmas Havaianas come with a slipper bag, a key chain and a small card. If your Havaianatic friend has snatched that up already, you still have a ton of new styles to choose from. Christmas Havaianas are P995 per pair. Available at Rustans, All Flip Flops, Chocolate Clothing Co.

Pam Pastor



JM GUANO RUNZALAN



FOR THE WISHMAKER

Charm bracelets are a dime a dozen. But Wish-ing Bracelets from Treasures and Trinkets do more than just adorn wrists. They are an adorable way for your recipient to express her dreams. Each bracelet comes with charms that match the wish. The "I wish I could eat junk food anytime" bracelet has burger, soda, fries, milkshake and chocolate charms. Credit card, dollar bills, shopping bags dangle from the "I wish I can go on a shopping spree" bracelet. There are dozens of bracelets to choose from, but some of our favorites include "I wish I was on the beach," "I wish I could be treated like a princess," "I wish I could sleep late" and "I wish I had a day at the spa." Other bracelet themes include dogs, dolphins, angels, surfing, sports, exercise, margaritas, vacation, dancing, Christmas, lucky charms and more. Wish-ing Bracelets are P595 each. Available at Rustans U.

Pam Pastor



PHOTOS BY RUDY ESPERAS



The Load CENTRAL BUSINESS PARTNER PROGRAM

MOTOR NO. GAMING PANG-NEGOSYO!

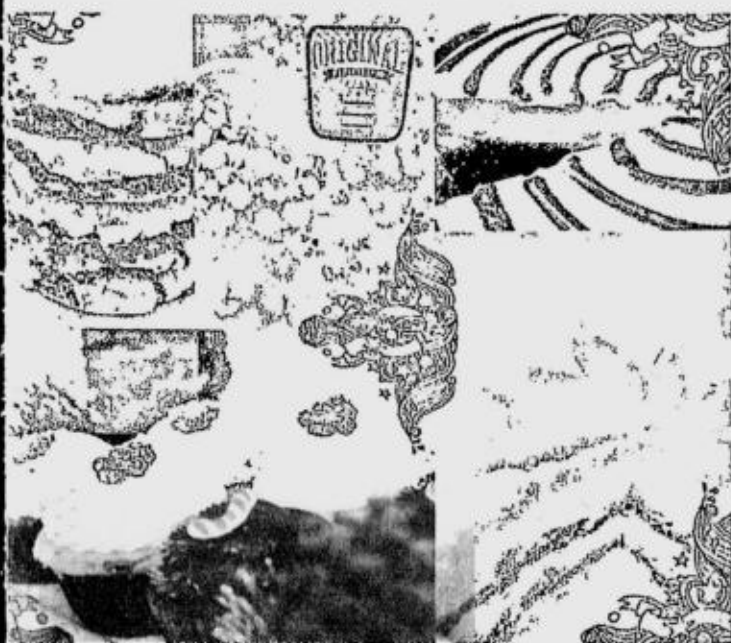
Interesado ka bang kumita sa sarili mong oras gamit ang iyong motorsiklo? Sa maliit na capital, you can start your own business and earn BIG MONEY!

Para sa mabilis na pag-arangkada ng iyong negosyo, tawag na sa (02) 951-3746 / 952-3746 or visit your nearest ComWorks office for inquiries.

Joining fee - NO FRANCHISE FEE - FREE SEMINAR!

Lipa Branch Address: New Lipa City Branch: 0917-1111 Tel: 043 154249-133728 Contact: Remya Magpala Mobile: 0918-812326	Marikina City Address: Marikina City Branch: 0917-1111 Tel: 043 154249-133728 Contact: Remya Magpala Mobile: 0918-812326	SM City Ula Address: 888 City Ula Branch: 0917-1111 Tel: 043 154249-133728 Contact: Remya Magpala Mobile: 0918-812326	Calamba Branch Address: 1st Floor Calamba City Branch: 0917-1111 Tel: 043 154249-133728 Contact: Remya Magpala Mobile: 0918-812326	San Juan Branch Address: 1st Floor San Juan City Branch: 0917-1111 Tel: 043 154249-133728 Contact: Remya Magpala Mobile: 0918-812326	San Fernando Pangasinana Address: 1st Floor Pangasinana Branch: 0917-1111 Tel: 043 154249-133728 Contact: Remya Magpala Mobile: 0918-812326
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THE FOOD LOVER



Yummy treats great for sharing
Top: Oatmeal and Chocolate Toffee Cookie Jars from Mom and Tina's. Call 9140833. Big Crinkles, P110 per pack 12. Order from Sweet Thang. Call 0916-2702063. Caramel Popcorn from Chef Tony's Gourmet Popcorn. Stalls can be found at The Block, SM North Edsa and The Podium. For other flavors and bulk orders, call 0917-500-CORN. Sinfully delicious and rich Chocolate Turtle Ice Cream Cake, P395 per 1.5 liter and P775 per three-liter container. Order from Mom and Tina's. Call 9140833.
Bottom: Absolutely addicting! Chocolate Truffle-filled Mochi Balls, P350 per box of 12. Order from Dezato Foods. Call Maria Gorre at 0920-9249155, visit <http://dezato.multiply.com>. Absolutely Fudgy Brownies, P130 per box of 12 and P220 per box of 24. Order from Sweet Thang. Call 0916 2702063. The perfect combination of soft cupcakes and yummy icing! Tray of Chocolate, Butter and Prune Cupcakes, P22 each. Mango Walnut Torte, P350 per 1.5 liter and P595 per three-liter container. Order from Mom and Tina's. Call 9140833.



Goodie platters perfect for family and group gifts
 Attractive Gift Boxes to be filled with your choice of goodies. Mini-cinnamon buns, P280 per 20 pieces and P510 per 40 pieces. Platter of Cashew Squares, Double Chocolate Brownies, Lemon Squares and Mango Squares, P320 per 20 pieces per flavor. Cloth-lined Basket of Caramel Tarts (P205 for 10 pieces). Tray of perfectly baked Oatmeal Raisin (P445 per 18 pieces), Chocolate Chip and delicious Toffee Brickle Cookies (P595 per 18 pieces). Order from Mom and Tina's Bakery Café at FRDC Bldg., 106 E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave, Ugong Pasig (across SM Hypermart Libis). Call 9140833. Pampanga branch is at Greenfield Square, Sindalan, San Fernando, call 045-6364118

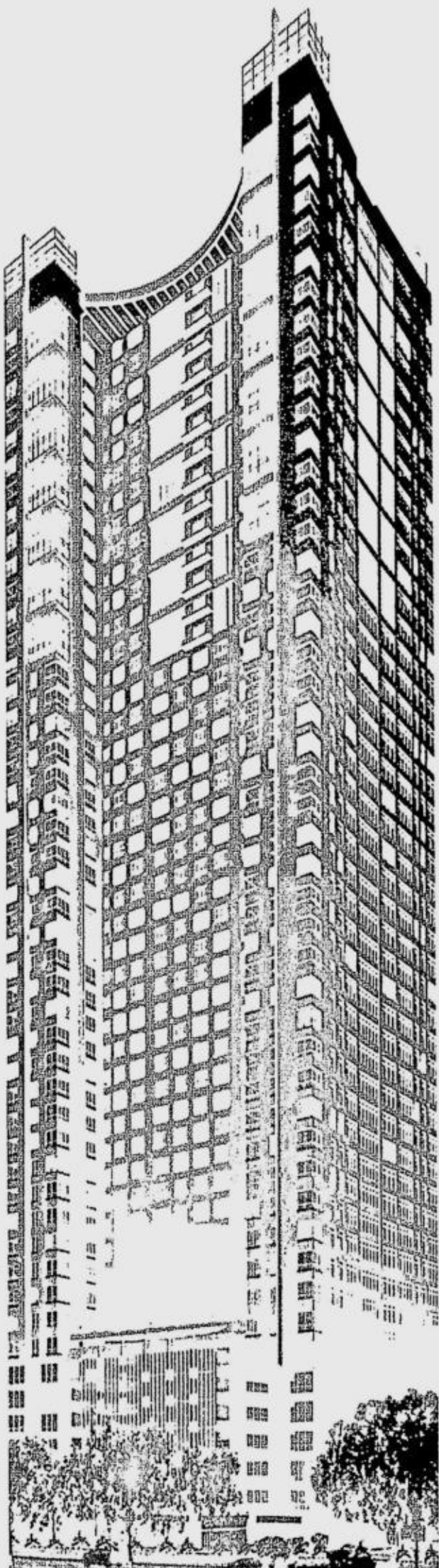
PHOTOS AND GRAPHICS BY ZEE CASTRO AND MIKE TALAMPAS OF POWERNAP



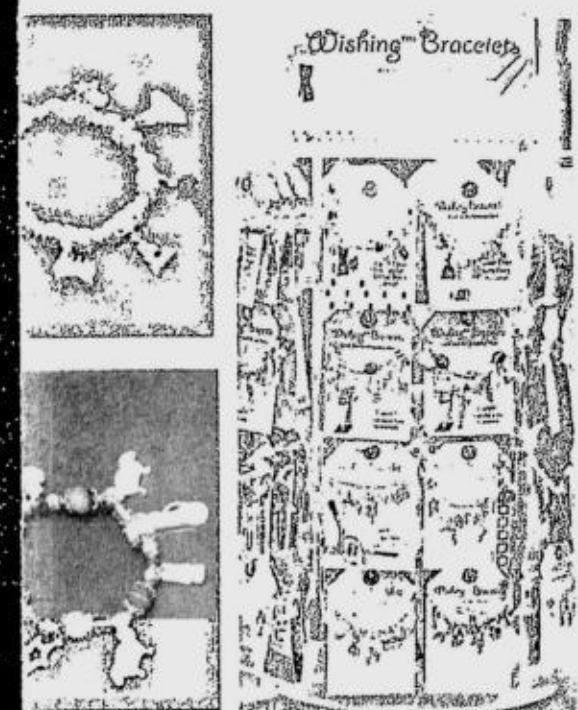
JIM GUIAO FUNZALAN

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Metropolitan condominium, the first residential and sports resort in one. From the athletic club to the malls, leisure areas and Makati CBD, you're set to live on-the-go. Experience Skyloft living the Metropolitan style with impeccably designed living areas overlooking the best side of Makati. So be where the action is all around you. Be at the Metropolitan.

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 Visit our website at www.philtown.net

PHILTOWN
 Philtown Properties
 Beyond Condos, Landmarks.

Share an evening to remember in Timeless Classics featuring the legendary Matt Monro, Jr. on December 7, 6:30 pm. For Invites call 638-1985. Present this portion during the event to avail of a special discount!

SUN

Triple Treats

SUN
CELLULAR
PREPAID

Prize Overload

Lots of prizes for each member
up for grabs weekly.

Pwede pang manalo ng
P1 million pesos each, TAX FREE!



Bumuo lang ng group of 3. The more you load, mas maraming discounts at mas marami ding chances of winning!

Form a group of 3 and register within 15 days. Only 1 person out of 3 needs to register. The other 2 simply have to join. *Pag naka-join na ang 3rd member, officially registered na ang group! May 10% discount na kayo sa Unlimited Services and Sulit Calls. At may raffle entries pang makukuha with every load. When the group reaches a total load top-up of P750 within 30 days, each member gets 20% discount on all Unlimited Services and Sulit Calls purchases the following month.

How to start a group:

Text "REG<space>first name/last name/address" and send to 333.
Ex. "REG Mark/Bernal/29th floor Galleria Corporate Center" send to 333

Sun will reply and assign a group name na pwedeng ipadala sa mga friends na gustong maki-join.

See posters and flyers for details on purchasing discounted load.

How to join a group:

Text "JOIN<space>group name/first name/last name/address" and send to 333.

Ex. "Join markb9221234567/Darvin/Sy Su/8747 Paseo de Roxas Ave. Makati" send to 333

Group members must use the assigned name na pinadala ng Sun Cellular sa 1st group member.

How to join the RAFFLE:

Simply load any of the following Sun Cellular prepaid products para makakuha ng electronic raffle entries:

1. Physical regular load
2. Physical unlimited call cards
3. Physical special cards
4. Dealer vouchers
5. Xpress Load regular reload
6. Xpress Load unlimited reload
7. Docking Station reload
8. JDD call card

Raffle entry accumulation table:

ACTIVITIES	NUMBER OF RAFFLE COUPONS EARNED
Every P15.00 purchase	1
When group loads P750 within 30 days	10
2nd consecutive month group loads P750 within 30 days	20
3rd consecutive month group loads P750 within 30 days	30

For more info, call the Sun Hotline 395-8000 or visit www.suncellular.com.ph. See posters and flyers for more details. Promo period: Oct. 23, 2006-Jan.28, 2007.

Prizes:

MINOR ITEMS	QTY	# OF GROUP WINNERS	DRAW DATE
Robinsons P500 Gift Certificate	90	30	Weekly
24/7 Call & Text Unlimited 7 days	120	40	Weekly
24/7 Text Unlimited 7 days	150	50	Weekly
MAJOR ITEMS	QTY	# OF GROUP WINNERS	DRAW DATE
iPad Nano 1G	9	3	Nov 14
Philips DVD Player DVP-5965	9	3	Nov 21
iPad Nano 4G	9	3	Nov 28
Canon Powershot A 430 Digital Camera	9	3	Dec 5
Sony Ericsson K790i Cellphone	6	2	Dec 12
Sony Ericsson P990i Cellphone	6	2	Dec 19
Canon Mini DV Camcorder (Elura 85)	6	2	Dec 26
IBM Thinkcenter A52-PC	6	2	Jan 2
Samsung LCD 32" wide screen TV	6	2	Jan 9
Samsung LCD 40" w/Home Theatre System	3	1	Jan 16
Mazda3 1.6L S	3	1	Jan 23
P1 Million	3	1	Jan 30

*20% tax for prizes exceeding P10,000.00 shall be shouldered by Digital Mobile Philippines Inc.

Prizes shown may vary from actual units.

Per DTI-JCR Permit No. 4182, Series of 2006.



THE CHURCH
 where the
 image of Ina
 comes from at
 the start the
 Traslacion



I am not much into religious celebrations, but the Peñafrancia Festival in Naga was a moving experience for me



AWESOME stained glass artworks adorn many churches in Bicol.

Text and photos by Niño Mark M. Sablan
 2bU! Correspondent

FILIPINOS ARE A RELIGIOUS people. We go to church and hear Mass every Sunday. Our homes have an altar full of several statues of saints that we bring sampaguita garlands to every night. We pray the rosary. We do the novena. And we have grand fiestas in honor of religious figures.

I haven't attended that many fiestas. And those that I had attended were all about processions and, of course, a lot of eating.

When I went to Bicol to witness the Peñafrancia festival, however, I did not only see how extremely religious and fanatical we could be as a people, I also experienced a very memorable and moving fiesta that changed how I look at these religious feasts.

Of course, the eating part was pretty memorable, too.

Camarines Sur is still the pilgrimage center of Bicol because of the Peñafrancia Festival, which is held there every September in honor of the region's patroness, Our Lady of Peñafrancia.

Just what happens during the fiesta? The image of the Virgin is carried by foot on a solemn procession (called the Traslacion) from the shrine to the cathedral, and then the image is returned to the Shrine through a fluvial procession on the Friday of the Novenario.

Literally thousands of devotees, pilgrims, tourists and visitors troop to this cathedral and along the banks of the river to watch the procession. Naga City is where the focus of all the celebration is, because the Basilica Minor that houses the image of the Virgin Mary is located there.

I had the honor of experiencing both the Traslacion and the fluvial procession.

Outside the church, the heat of the scorching sun was merciless, but no one complained about the heat, or the crowd, the stench of sweat. (Except me, of course.) Instead, everyone patiently waited for Ina while chanting "Ina" and "Viva la Virgen." Men in uniform were also scattered everywhere to make sure that the crowd of usually emotional devotees were under control.

When the float carrying the image of Ina

GOING/E4



MEDALLIONS and rosaries and other religious items on sale during the Peñafrancia festival



COLORFUL headbands with messages like "Viva La Virgen" are sold outside churches for P15 each.

Going the extra mile for Our Lady

just my store.



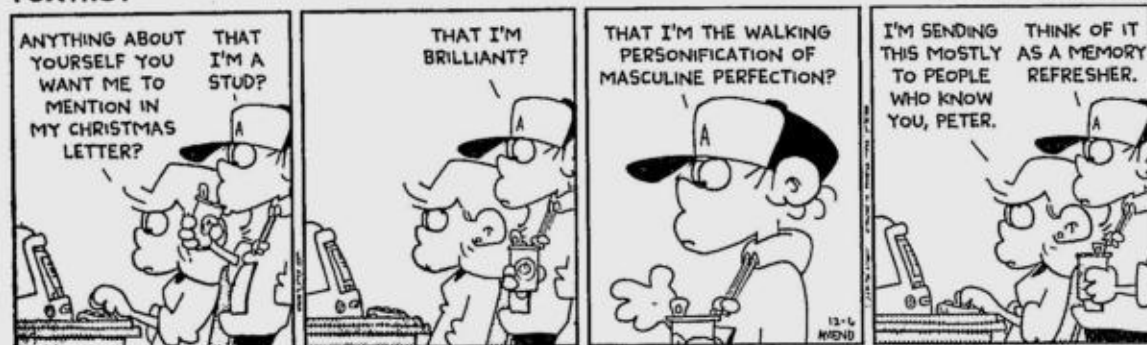
We've got it all for you!

S&M
 DEPARTMENT STORE

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 CAGAYAN DE ORO • BICUTAN • LUCENA • BAGUIO • MARILAO • DASMARINAS • BATANGAS • DELGADO • SAN LAZARO • SUCAT • STA. ROSA • CLARK • MALL OF ASIA • LIPA

FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND



A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA



BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT



PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR



MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL



LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO



ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO



DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS



KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA



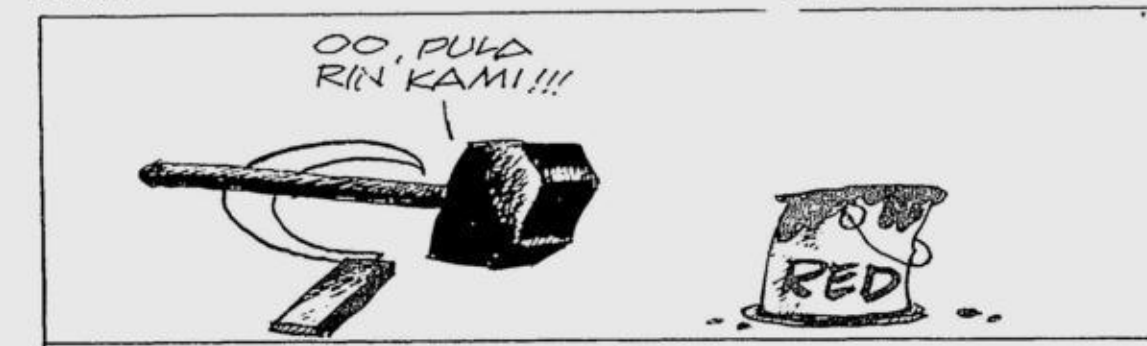
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO



TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING



BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON

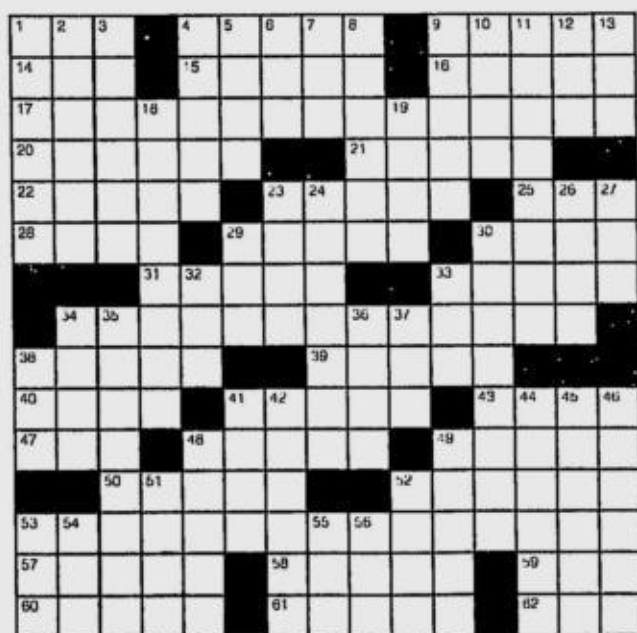


DAILY CROSSWORD

HOROSCOPE

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

- ACROSS**
- 1 Dell loaf
 - 4 Repeated musical theme
 - 9 One cubic decimeter
 - 14 Silthery fish
 - 15 Rigel's constellation
 - 16 La Scala offering
 - 17 One with a limited wardrobe?
 - 20 Dress shapes
 - 21 Ancient moralist
 - 22 Have a feeling
 - 23 Gawks
 - 25 With 33D, Yule beverage
 - 28 Waste allowance
 - 29 Assessed
 - 30 German wife
 - 31 Sternward
 - 33 Seasonal tunes
 - 34 One with a limited vocabulary?
 - 38 Novelist Jong
 - 39 Casual military address
 - 40 Pierre's pop
 - 41 Bohemian
 - 43 Glaswegian
 - 47 TV spots
 - 48 Pulverize
 - 49 Space invaders company
 - 50 Carved pole
 - 52 Concert sites
 - 53 One with limited engagements?
 - 57 Walled city near Madrid
 - 58 Unclogging product
 - 59 Oxford fellow
 - 60 Auctioned autos, often
 - 61 Composer Copland
 - 62 Metric measure
- DOWN**
- 1 Meal
 - 2 Disney classic, "Old"
 - 3 Julia's role on "Seinfeld"
 - 4 Actress Blakely
 - 5 Tolkien baddies
 - 6 Zip
 - 7 "Inka Dinka"
 - 8 Recorded
 - 9 Wind-blown soil
 - 10 _ facto
 - 11 Moderated
 - 12 Notable period
 - 13 Flowed
 - 18 Single example
 - 19 Pay attention to
 - 23 Hook with a handle
 - 24 Certifies under oath
 - 26 Guys' sweets
 - 27 Director van Sant
 - 29 Brit. flyboys
 - 30 Woodsman
 - 32 Big constrictor
 - 33 See 25A
 - 34 TV horse
 - 35 Landing site
 - 36 Scrub up
 - 37 Dryly humorous
 - 38 Ecological watchdog grp.
 - 41 You said it!
 - 42 Holiday Inn rival
 - 44 U.S. neighbor
 - 45 Speechifier
 - 46 Herbal drink
 - 48 Greek porticos
 - 49 Inert gas
 - 51 European capital
 - 52 AD word
 - 53 Golf standard
 - 54 Night before
 - 55 Gun owner's grp.
 - 56 Rower's need



By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR

12/6/06

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved



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YOU BORN TODAY: You're practical, and you quickly adapt to whatever is happening in your life. Because you go with the flow, you make the best of any situation. You're a good problem solver, and great at organizing others. You expect agreement from others and are surprised when people do not embrace your worldview. In the year ahead, you'll finish or wrap up something.

Birthdate of: Janine Turner, actress; Dave Brubeck, jazz musician; Ira Gershwin, lyricist



ARIES (March 21 to April 19): This is an excellent day to make long-range plans regarding education, publishing, the media, medicine or legal matters. You're taking a futuristic view of things.



TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You feel practical and responsible about home and family today. Because of this, you want to do the right thing. You want to provide for everybody. You want things to feel secure.



GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Discussions with partners about future plans will be practical and productive today. Both parties are taking a long-range view of things, especially in a practical sense.



CANCER (June 21 to July 22): This is an excellent day for business, commerce and any work you have to accomplish. You'll enjoy doing practical things and tying up loose ends.



LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Some of you might fall in love with somebody of an age difference today. Parents can make long-range plans for issues related to children.



VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): This is a good day to discuss changes at home that will have a long-range benefit. You might buy something beautiful that will last a long time.



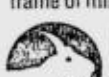
LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Because you are in a serious and practical frame of mind, give some thought to your future money concerns. Think less of your wants and more of your needs.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is a wonderful day to do business. Make long-range plans connected with how to earn money or even spend it. Your frame of mind is practical. (You won't overlook details.)



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): This is a good day to sit down with anyone, especially somebody more experienced than you are, to discuss long-range plans for the future. You're in a very sensible frame of mind.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Your research skills are tops today. Conversations with the government or large institutions will be productive. (Take a long-range view.)



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Someone older or more experienced than you has advice for you. Since you're an intelligent sign who thinks outside the box, you will listen!



PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Where do you want to be five years from now? What do you have to do this month to begin to go in that direction? This is a good day to ponder your long-range life goals.

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

			5	7	1			
7			3		2			
9	2	5						
		4					7	
8	9	7				6	3	1
3						4		
						7	6	3
	6		8					5
	3	4	6					

Difficulty Level ★★

12/06

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

1	2	7	4	6	8	3	5	9
3	9	8	1	2	5	6	4	7
5	6	4	9	7	3	8	2	1
6	7	2	3	5	4	9	1	8
9	8	5	2	1	6	7	3	4
4	1	3	7	8	9	2	6	5
8	3	6	5	9	1	4	7	2
2	5	9	6	4	7	1	8	3
7	4	1	8	3	2	5	9	6

Difficulty Level ★★

Win a 'barkada' trip from Jack n' Jill!



NINNA Mendoza,
Kyla Ortigas and Zane Ronquillo

DREAMING OF A LOCAL "LONELY Planet" adventure with your best mates? Camera-toting young Pinoys, take note: If you're saving up for that next grand *barkada* vacation, the road to paradise may just be a click and an e-mail away.

Capture your gang's best *barkada* moments and get the chance to win plane tickets to Boracay, Bohol and other Philippine dream destinations, as well as other great prizes.

Celebrating its 50th anniversary, Jack n' Jill ties up with 2BU! for a special photo competition, the winner of which will get to take his or her *barkada* on a memorable trip.

All it takes is a photo of you and your gang having a good time with Jack n' Jill products. Include a photo caption and a short essay on how Jack n' Jill products have become a part of your *barkada*'s life.

The photos may be taken with any of the following: Chippy, Potato Chips, Taquitos, Spuds, Star Pops, Dynamite, Maxx Menthol Candy, Milky Knots, Berry Knots, XO Chocolate Shake Candy and Magic Flakes.

When sending the entries, include the sender's name, school or company address, age, e-mail address, contact number (landline and mobile) and the names of friends in the photo. E-mail jackandjill50thyear@gmail.com.

One weekly winner will be drawn until Dec. 31, and they will receive Jack n' Jill loot bags for their whole *barkada*. Sun Cellular will also reward two runners-up with T230 phones with P1,800 worth of Sun Cellular Sure Load.

For the grand prize, which shall be drawn on the last week of December, the sender of the best photo of his friends will win four round-trip tick-

ets to any local destination, courtesy of Cebu Pacific.

What are you waiting for? Bring your camera to the next movie marathon, random road trip or gimmick night and snap away. Your grandest group adventure awaits!

This week's winners: Ninna Mendoza, Kyla Ortigas and Zane Ronquillo

"My girlfriends—who are also my officemates—love to hang out during our breaks. We always munch on Jack n' Jill which we always keep a stash of in our drawers! Or sometimes we go to the Mini Stop nearby so we can buy our Jack n' Jill fix. In between munches of Chippy or Potato Chips or Chiz Curls, we talk about work, fashion, movies and our officemates. Hanging out with each other is much, much more fun with Jack n' Jill!"

2BU! TO THE RESCUE

What do you need?

2BU!'S NEW SECTION PROMISES TO FIND the answers and turn your desires into reality.

Last week, we asked you to e-mail us about your needs—and, okay, even your wants.

Our inbox is starting to get flooded—and we like it that way.

We've already started turning dreams into reality. But we can't wait to do more.

What do you need?

Look inside yourself, search your soul and tell us—what do you desire?

Do you want a surprise birthday party for your hardworking father? Are you worried that you won't be able to buy a beautiful prom dress? Do you want to send a gift to your mom abroad? Are your shoes falling apart? Do you want a Christmas feast for your beloved *yaya*'s family? Do you need books for school? Is there a celebrity you really want to meet?

What do you need? Nothing is too big or small.

Tell us—and we might just find the answers and turn your desires into reality.

E-mail 2butotherescue@gmail.com

Dance... to save our forests

YOGA MANILA PRESENTS THE PHILIPPINES' first-ever Yoga Trance Dance workshop led by Teresa Herrera, an actor/yoga teacher based in Venice, California, Dec. 7, 7 p.m., at the penthouse of Century Plaza, 120 Perea St., Legazpi Village, Makati City. Part of the proceeds will be donated to Trees for the Future, an organization that spearheads tree-planting projects in the Philippines and the world.

Trance Dance is an exploration of movement through yoga, dance, and music to encourage self-expression and discovery by tapping into one's life force, or *prana*.

This free form of yoga was developed by the world-renowned yoga teacher Shiva Rea.

Workshop fee is P700 per person. Limited slots available. Call or text Yoga Manila at 0917-522YOGA or e-mail yogamani-la@gmail.com.

AMONG LAST YEAR'S BIG winners were the FEU Tamaraws, curls, Teen Vogue, Bench, "Desperate Housewives," Embassy, "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory," and Gwen Stefani.

Who will be the big winners of 2006?

We want you to be the judge again. Tell us who you think deserve to be hailed the Best and Worst of 2006 under the following categories:

Music: band, song, singer, radio station, radio DJ, VJ, music video, album and concert

Film: movie, movie theater, actor, actress

Fashion: male model, female model, fashion designer, brand, shop, trend, accessory, fashion icon

Health and beauty: beauty product, spa, salon, hairstyle, fitness regimen

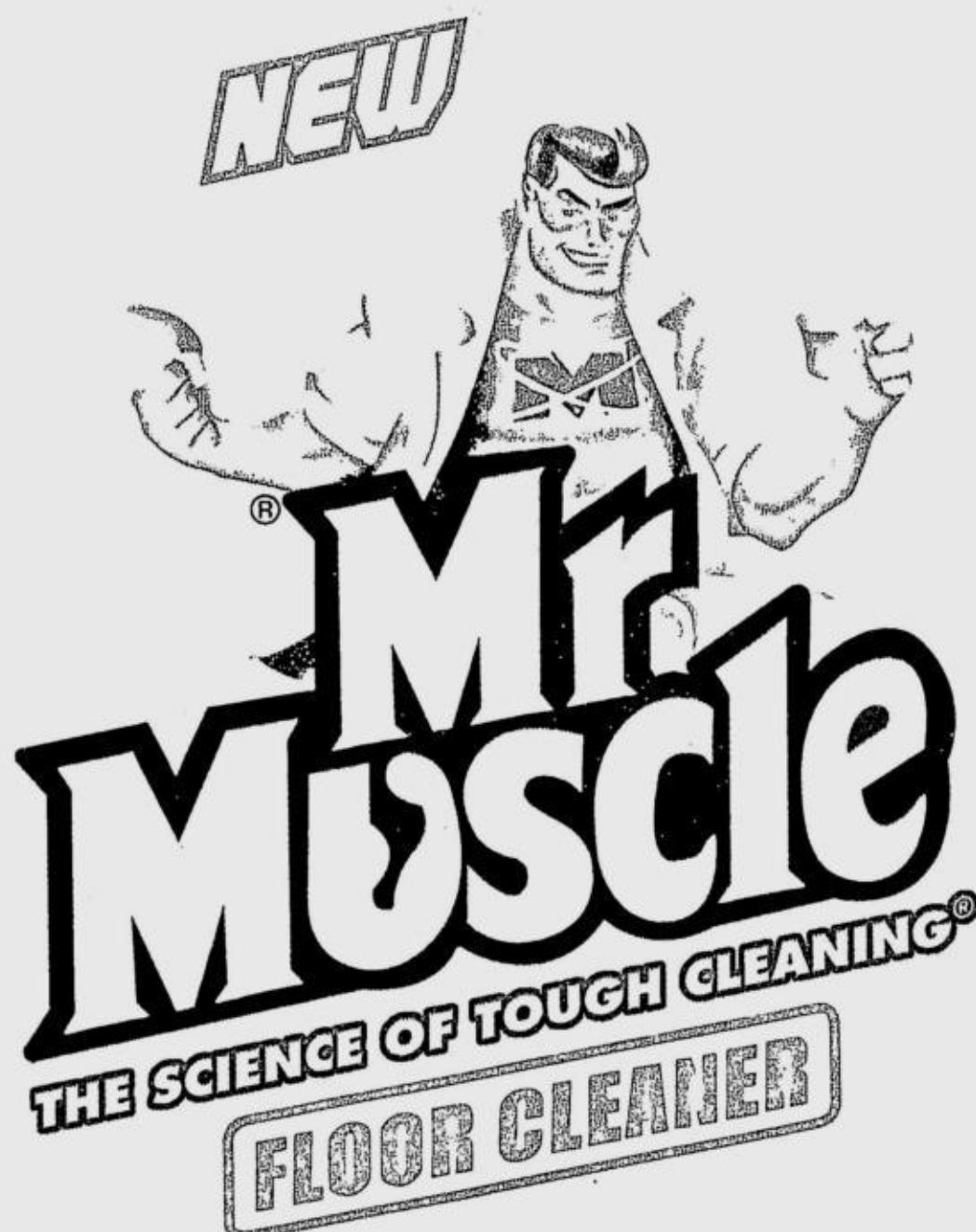
Literature: book, writer, magazine

Food: restaurant, dish, fast food

Sports: athlete, UAAP team, NCAA team

Television: commercial, channel, TV show, TV actress, TV actor, VJ, music channel

Technology: website, blog, gadget, game
Send your answers to 2BU! Best and Worst of 2006 Poll, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Ave. and Yague St., Makati; or e-mail contest2bu@inquirer.com.ph. Have your answers in by Dec. 22, 12 noon.



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Going the extra mile for Our Lady

From page E1



BICOLANOS of all ages competed in a streetdance parade contest.

left the church, everyone went wild chasing the image, wanting to touch it.

Imagine a lot of people crying, chanting and clapping all at the same time—because of the Virgin Mary. It was a truly surreal experience for me.

The fluvial procession, however, was less moving for me since I wasn't able to witness it. The riverbank was jam-packed and I couldn't squeeze in even for a quick peek. However, seeing Bicolanos running in the streets or jumping on top of cars and jeeps just to catch a glimpse of the Ina's image amazed me. The things that these devotees do!

At the end of the day, out of breath, drenched in sweat and full of complaints, I realized how I was nothing compared to these Marian faithful who could and would do everything for the Virgin Mary.

But then, another realization: For an agnostic like me, I, too, had gone the extra mile.

E-mail the author at marksablan_2bu@yahoo.com



Bottoms up

By Walter Ang
2bU! Contributor

IN HIS BOOK "THE METRO-Sexual Guide to Style," Michael Flocker concisely articulates a great way of looking at libations: Beer is easily consumed, fun to indulge in and comes in a variety of brands. There are light beers, dark beers, cheap beers and top-of-the-line beers.

Wine is more complex and is more of an acquired taste. Defined by region and produced with a much greater attention to detail, wines are multifaceted and contain subtleties and distinctions that are not always immediately recognizable. Of course, there are also cheap wines.

That being said, he also provides a great analogy for both, likening beer to movies and wine to films.

If that's the case, then the recent wine festi-

val, "Toast 2006: The Art of Winemaking," was a veritable Metro Manila Filmfest for wine lovers.

Organized by WineDepot, the festival featured booths of the different labels and wineries that it carries. Taking over the Rockwell Tent, the festival gathered wine aficionados despite the balmy weather. Attendees got to taste all the wine they could while chatting up representatives of different wineries.

Now, wine is one of those things that many 2bU! readers might only have a fleeting encounter with. The occasional wedding reception, a birthday party here and there, or a fancy date when you're out to impress or be impressed. After all, it's so much easier to order a keg of beer if you're out with friends, or to get your buzz via cocktails.

However, trying out something new and gaining a better appreciation for or perspective of it is always a good thing. When it comes to food and drink, there's no other way to learn than to literally take it in.



Trying it out

For wines, you can, of course, read up a little bit before you buy a bottle or two. You can try out your selections at home with family and friends (that way, you can make faces and be as loud as you want with your commentary). One good trick is to buy two kinds of wine so you can compare. The next time, get a new one to compare with the one you liked.

When it comes to red wine, the usual kinds are cabernet, chianti, merlot, shiraz, pinot noir and zinfandel. The last two are considered more "light and sweet" and are a good first step for those who want to begin exploring the universe of wines.

At one of the wine-tasting classes at the festival, Angus Lilley of Ravenswood Winery (based in Sonoma County, California) shared copious notes and insights on five different zinfandels, namely Big River, Barrica, Beloni, Dickerson and Teldeschi.

Lilley explained that where a wine is made greatly influences the way it tastes. Apparently, California has diverse wine-growing environments, such as varying soils and climates, that confer different grape characters. The way a wine is made also influences the outcome. How a wine is aged—in French oak barrels, for example—and how long it is aged also create different varieties of wine. Thus, a wide variety of zinfandels.

The possible combinations and permutations have given birth to Ravenswood's three tiers of zinfandels: Vineyard Designates (se-

lect and limited production), County Series (a blend of modern and classic wine-making techniques), and Vinters Blend Series (wines for everyday drinking). As Lilley uncorked and espoused the differences of the five featured labels, the class attendees partook and experienced a taste of each.

Mini tasting sessions

The good news is that wine festivals aren't the only time when wine tastings are held. In the three WineDepot showrooms in Makati, Pasig and Alabang, a nominal fee of P150 lets one have a mini wine-tasting session of his own. Advice on what kinds of wine you might like come courtesy of the staff.

"Our staff are well trained to answer any question. We even send them abroad to the different wineries for training," shared Hazel Buenas of WineDepot. "All the wines we carry also have easy-to-read identity cards that note the taste, let's say sweet or spicy, as well as what kinds of food can be best paired with a particular wine. This makes it a bit easier for first-timers to narrow down their choices."

In their efforts to make wine more accessible to a wider audience, WineDepot has a text-message service for updates on featured labels, as well as a website, www.winedepot.com.ph, which offers online shopping, information on highlighted selections, current promos, and a newsletter to boot. Yes, a prime launch pad for further adventures with wine.

Call WineDepot at 8894889.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

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OPENING TODAY

Reyna

Stars Eddie Garcia, Paolo Contis, Melanie Marquez, Eugene Domingo, Keanna Reeves
Directed by Soxy Topacio

Always a loser, a desperate female contestant (Reeves) pretends to be a drag queen and joins a gay pageant in a last-ditch effort to bring home the crown. To fulfill the dying wish of her late mom (Marquez) who's a barangay beauty queen, the poor girl asks the help of three gay mentors and an aunt who works as a waxer in a salon (Domingo). Think of a reverse makeover à la "Queer Eye for the Straight Girl." Scriptwriter Kay Brondial, who developed the concept with Cel Santiago and GB Sampedro, insists that she steered clear of the "Queer" paradigm and "added unique Pinoy touches to the story." In sum, "it's about our obsession with beauty ... that makes it a comedy film that everyone—gay or straight, male or female—can relate to," Brondial asserts.

A Good Year

Stars Russell Crowe, Albert Finney, Freddie Highmore, Marion Cotillard
Directed by Ridley Scott

Based on Peter Mayle's 2004 best-seller, this European romp finds an unlikely hero in a notoriously hardworking London investment banker (Crowe) who is dragged kicking and screaming to a holiday in France when he inherits his "free-spirited" uncle's Provencal vineyard. William Arnold of Seattle Post-Intelligencer says "it's light, airy, easygoing, idyllic and rather goofy." Richard Corliss of Time dismisses it as "'Cars' without the animation ... Crowe surprises by failing." John Hart of Newsweek concurs: "[It's] a deeply artificial adaptation ... There's a lazy quality [to it] ... as if the filmmakers imagined themselves as taking a vacation while they were shooting it."

The Nativity Story

Stars Keisha Castle-Hughes, Shohreh Aghdashloo, Ciaran Hinds, Shaun Toub
Directed by Catherine Hardwicke

The story of Jesus Christ's Immaculate Conception and birth is retold by Hardwicke who reportedly embarked on a quest "to make the



Rita copes with son's death

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

LITTLE ELIA JESU has passed on just three weeks after he was born to his ecstatic parents, actress Rita Avila and TV director Erick Reyes.

Rita and Erick consider their "miracle baby" an angel.

Elia Jesu (pronounced Eleeeya Yesu) had been born with a "complex" heart condition. Rita confirmed this in a text message to INQUIRER Entertainment.

"[It] also affected his lungs," she said. "He had a [difficult] time breathing."

Rita added that she has taken consolation in the thought that her baby is no longer in pain. "[Instead] he is feeling pure joy and is in perfect health [in heaven]."

Still, said the grieving mom, "I miss him terribly." Her recourse is to focus on the positive. "He left us with great moments to remember."

Miscarriage

Rita started fervently praying for a child after she suffered a miscarriage last year.

She recalled that, on the night before she found out she was pregnant, she had asked for a sign. "When I opened 'Our Daily Bread' [book] the following

morning, the quote for the day was from Luke 1:31: 'You will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son and shall call His name Jesus.' That's why we named him Jesu, Latin for Jesus."

Unknown to Rita, Erick had also asked for a sign on the same night. "When he opened his e-mail the next day, cherubs appeared onscreen."

Prayer

On Nov. 10, Rita gave birth to the 5.5-lbs. Jesu. On Dec. 2, he bid farewell.

The actress recalled that, when she was pregnant, she would sing "Ama Namin (The Lord's Prayer)" to her baby every day. After giving birth, she would sing the prayer to him and he seemed to recognize it, she said. "He would move his eyes from side to side before falling asleep."

In spite of everything, Rita said, she is thankful. "I am grateful for having been a mom for three weeks ... for my wonderful husband and the selflessness of our relatives and friends who saw us through all of this."

Jesu was cremated on Sunday morning. An afternoon Mass followed at the crypt of Christ the King in Green Meadows.

Rita said the priest assured them: "We don't pray for Jesu, but to Jesu to intercede for us. We now have an angel in heaven."



JESU'S birth was long-awaited, his stay brief. "I miss him terribly," says Rita. "But he left us with happy memories."

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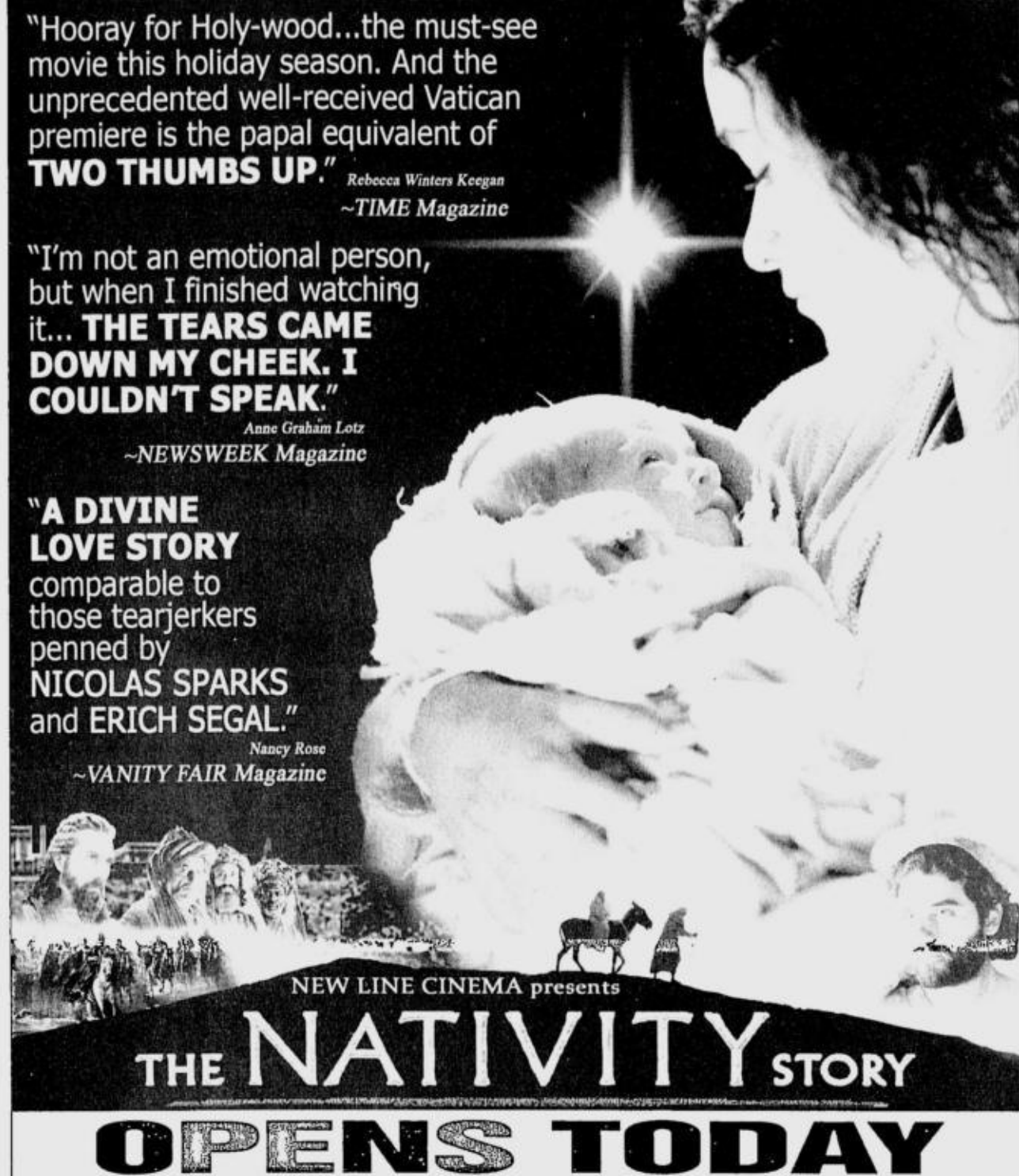
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Nancy Rose
~VANITY FAIR Magazine



Peace, love, tax write-off

BETHEL, New York—Wanted: tie-dyed shirts, snapshots and other artifacts from the August 1969 Woodstock music festival, a high-water mark of that decade. The Bethel Woods Center for the Arts wants them for a museum honoring the '60s. A 4,800-seat concert pavilion at the former farm 130 km northwest of New York City opened this summer. Donations will be accepted until Dec. 10. AP

MTRCB RATING: **PG-13** Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult

Russell Crowe

a film by Ridley Scott

a good year

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G4	4 BORAT	5 THE RETURN	6 THE NATIVITY	7 CASINO ROYALE
	1 HAPPY FEET	2 THE NATIVITY		
GB1	1 HAPPY FEET	2 THE NATIVITY		
	1 HAPPY FEET	2 THE NATIVITY		
GB3	3 ALL THE KING'S MEN	4 A GOOD YEAR	5 CASINO ROYALE	
	1 THE NATIVITY	2 A GOOD YEAR		
ATC	3 HAPPY FEET	4 DECK THE HALLS	5 CASINO ROYALE	
	1 THE NATIVITY	2 HAPPY FEET	3 THE MARINE	4 REYNA
ACC	1 THE NATIVITY	2 HAPPY FEET	3 THE MARINE	4 REYNA
	1 REYNA	2 THE NATIVITY		
M2	3 A GOOD YEAR	4 HAPPY FEET	5 INANG YAYA	
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Ex-Beatle

seeks help
LONDON—FORMER Beatle Paul McCartney has seen a psychiatrist for help since the breakup of his marriage in May, he said Friday.

McCartney, 64, and Heather Mills McCartney, 38, announced their separation in May after four years of marriage and began divorce proceedings in July. They have a 3-year-old daughter, Beatrice.

In an interview with Britain's Radio Times magazine, McCartney said he had sought solace in writing music, but had been helped by professional psychiatric counseling.

"It's not a bad idea to have someone to talk to," McCartney said.

AP

To the end

LOS ANGELES—Jennifer Lopez's first husband, Ojani Noa, told a judge that he plans to fight her efforts to quash a tell-all memoir.

Noa, 31, said Friday in a pretrial hearing that he regrets agreeing to a June 30 preliminary injunction that prohibits him from "criticizing, denigrating, casting in a negative light or otherwise disparaging or causing disparagement" to Lopez.

"I want to fight this thing to the end," he said. "My life has not been the same since this lawsuit was filed."

The judge gave Noa until Jan. 17 to hire a lawyer or represent himself.

Lopez filed her lawsuit April 10 and obtained a temporary restraining order barring Noa from publishing intimate details of their sex life.

Noa said Friday that Lopez misunderstood what the book was about.

"This was to be about my life story, coming here from Cuba," he said. "She was only a part of my life."

AP

Alcoholic

NEW YORK—Lindsay Lohan has been attending Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, her publicist said Friday.

"She started attending some, and I think it's a positive thing," Leslie Sloane told The Associated Press. "My biggest fear is who's the big idiot to 'out' which [chapter] she goes to."

She said Lohan, 20, made the decision on her own to attend meetings, although Sloane added: "And, by the way, she's not saying ... she'll stop drinking tomorrow."

"It's a place to go and feel safe," she said. "No one judges her, and it's going to be a slow process. But, to me, the fact that she's seeing that there's something not right makes her smarter than the next person."

AP

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2 REYNA	7 BORAT
3 HAPPY FEET	8 THE RETURN
4 A GOOD YEAR	9 FRAGILE
5 THE NATIVITY STORY	10 DECK THE HALLS

ERMITA 838-7809 to 12

1 THE NATIVITY STORY	
2 REYNA	5 A GOOD YEAR
3 THE RETURN	6 HAPPY FEET
4 KAMA SUTRA 3	7 CASINO ROYALE

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1 THE NATIVITY STORY	5 HAPPY FEET
2 KAMA SUTRA 3	6 CASINO ROYALE
3 REYNA	7 THE RETURN
4 A GOOD YEAR	8 DECK THE HALLS

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1 KAMA SUTRA 3	3 REYNA
2 A GOOD YEAR	4 HAPPY FEET

CITISQUARE MALABON 882-8193 • 882-8199

1 REYNA	1 THE NATIVITY STORY
2 INANG YAYA	2 KAMA SUTRA 3
3 RESERVE	3 A GOOD YEAR
4 RESERVE	4 HAPPY FEET

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4 HAPPY FEET	

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1 REYNA	1 REYNA
2 KALELDO	2 KALELDO
3 BORAT	3 BORAT
4 FRAGILE	4 FRAGILE

DASMARINAS (046) 852-2125 (046) 418-4332

1 REYNA	1 REYNA
2 DECK THE HALLS	2 KALELDO
3 FEAST	3 BORAT
4 EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH	4 FRAGILE

ANGELES (045) 852-2346

1 REYNA	1 REYNA
2 KALELDO	2 KALELDO
3 BORAT	3 BORAT
4 FRAGILE	4 FRAGILE

IMUS (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188

1 REYNA	1 REYNA
2 A GOOD YEAR	2 KALELDO
3 CASINO ROYALE	3 BORAT
4 HAPPY FEET	4 HAPPY FEET

STARMILLS (045) 875-1927 (045) 861-2270

1 REYNA	1 REYNA
2 KALELDO	2 KALELDO
3 BORAT	3 BORAT
4 HAPPY FEET	4 HAPPY FEET

BACOLODI (034) 441-0455 (034) 441-0456

1 CASINO ROYALE	1 REYNA
2 ANG PAMANA: THE INHERITANCE	2 ANG PAMANA: THE INHERITANCE
3 SANTA CLAUSE 3	3 SANTA CLAUSE 3
4 BOA	4 THE NATIVITY STORY
5 HAPPY FEET	5 HAPPY FEET
6 EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH	6 CASINO ROYALE

ILOILO (033) 436-5970

1 REYNA	1 REYNA
2 ANG PAMANA: THE INHERITANCE	2 ANG PAMANA: THE INHERITANCE
3 SANTA CLAUSE 3	3 SANTA CLAUSE 3
4 THE NATIVITY STORY	4 THE NATIVITY STORY
5 HAPPY FEET	5 HAPPY FEET
6 CASINO ROYALE	6 CASINO ROYALE

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2. GRIDIRON GANG
3. A GOOD YEAR
4. THE NATIVITY
5. THE RETURN
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THE NATIVITY

CINEMA 2
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1. HAPPY FEET
2. THE RETURN
3. INANG YAYA
4. CASINO ROYALE
5. A GOOD YEAR
6. THE NATIVITY
7. WAG KANG LILONGON
8. REYNA
9. MEE-SHEE
10. DECK THE HALLS
11. CASINO ROYALE

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901

1. THE RETURN
2. INANG YAYA
3. CASINO ROYALE
4. TRUMPETS JOSEPH THE DREAM
5. FRAGILE
6. THE NATIVITY
7. MEE-SHEE THE WATER GIANT
8. THANK YOU FOR SMOKING
9. WAG KANG LILONGON
10. HAPPY FEET
11. REYNA
12. A GOOD YEAR

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749

1. A GOOD YEAR
2. FRAGILE
3. ZU WARRIORS
4. CASINO ROYALE
5. REYNA
6. WAG KANG LILONGON
7. HAPPY FEET
8. INANG YAYA
9. THE NATIVITY
10. THE RETURN
11. PITONG DALAGITA
12. AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416

1. CASINO ROYALE
2. INANG YAYA
3. HAPPY FEET
4. THE NATIVITY
5. WAG KANG LILONGON
6. DECK THE HALLS
7. A GOOD YEAR
8. THE RETURN
9. REYNA
10. FRAGILE

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1. HAPPY FEET
2. THE NATIVITY
3. A GOOD YEAR
4. REYNA
5. WAG KANG LILONGON
6. INANG YAYA

SM CITY SOUTH MALL 806-6888

1. REYNA
2. THE NATIVITY
3. A GOOD YEAR
4. HAPPY FEET
5. WAG KANG LILONGON
6. INANG YAYA
7. THE RETURN
8. CASINO ROYALE
9. MEE-SHEE

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1. THE NATIVITY
2. REYNA
3. INANG YAYA
4. HAPPY FEET

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240

1. AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH
2. THE RETURN
3. THE ATIVITY
4. FRAGILE
5. HAPPY FEET
6. CASINO ROYALE
7. REYNA
8. GIGIL
9. PITONG DALAGITA
10. A GOOD YEAR
11. WAG KANG LILONGON
12. INANG YAYA

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1. HAPPY FEET
2. REYNA
3. DECK THE HALLS
4. FEAST

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917

1. HAPPY FEET
2. THE RETURN
3. DECK THE HALLS
4. REYNA

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975

1. THE NATIVITY
2. INANG YAYA
3. HAPPY FEET
4. REYNA

LUZON

SM CITY BACOR (046) 417-3868

1. REYNA
2. A GOOD YEAR
3. CASINO ROYALE
4. THE NATIVITY
5. HAPPY FEET
6. INANG YAYA
7. WAG KANG LILONGON
8. FRAGILE

SM CITY CLARK (045) 625-5844-45

1. HAPPY FEET
2. CASINO ROYALE
3. MEE-SHEE
4. WAG KANG LILONGON
5. REYNA
6. PITONG DALAGITA

SM CITY MARILAO (044) 933-2013-17

1. HAPPY FEET
2. REYNA
3. WAG KANG LILONGON
4. INANG YAYA

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1. FLAG OF OUR FATHERS
2. SANTA CLAUSE 3
3. FRAGILE
4. THE GRUDGE 2

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1. CASINO ROYALE
2. REYNA
3. ZU WARRIORS
4. PAMANA
5. INANG YAYA
6. PITONG DALAGITA

SM CITY LIPA (043) 756-7925

1. CASINO ROYALE
2. REYNA
3. FEAST
4. PAMANA

SM CITY LUCENA (042) 7108977-80

1. THE PRESTIGE
2. HAPPY FEET
3. WAG KANG LILONGON
4. SANTA CLAUSE 3

SM CITY DAVAO (082) 2976998

1. CASINO ROYALE
2. PAMANA
3. REYNA
4. INANG YAYA
5. HAPPY FEET
6. THE NATIVITY

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088) 859-2884

1. THE NATIVITY
2. HAPPY FEET
3. SANTA CLAUSE 3
4. CASINO ROYALE

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1. CASINO ROYALE
2. FLAG OF OUR FATHERS
3. THE MARINE
4. THE NATIVITY
5. SCHOOL FOR SCOUNDRELS
6. REYNA
7. WAG KANG LILONGON
8. HAPPY FEET

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2. RESERVED
3. HAPPY FEET
4. SANTA CLAUSE 3
5. THE NATIVITY
6. CASINO ROYALE
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A GOOD YEAR 2:55, 5:40, 8:25, 11:00 PG-13
HAPPY FEET 1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00 G
CASINO ROYAL 1:10, 4:20, 7:30, 10:40 PG-13
THE NATIVITY 1:20, 3:45, 6:10, 8:35, 11:00 G

LOS ANGELES—DREAMWORKS ANIMATION SKG Inc. led the pack in this year's Annie Awards nominations for film, television and home video animation, garnering 17 nods for two features, "Flushed Away" and "Over the Hedge."

The Disney-Pixar film "Cars," a nostalgic



"OVER THE HEDGE"

nod to the country's forgotten backroads, tied "Flushed Away" with the most nominations with nine, according to a Monday announcement from the International Animated Film Society.

The society will present the 34th annual awards for achievement in animation on Feb. 11 in Glendale.

"Flushed Away," a co-production with British filmmakers Aardman Animation, received nine nominations, including for directing, writing and voice acting for Ian McKellan, who gave a Shakespearean croak to the evil character of "Toad."

"Over the Hedge," the animated version of the popular comic strip, earned eight nominations, including Best Animated Feature and Voice Acting for Wanda Sykes, who portrayed a skunk named Stella.

Oscar peg

Nominations for "Cars," from Pixar Animation Studios and The Walt Disney Co., included Best Animated Feature and Best Director for John Lasseter, director of the landmark Pixar film "Toy Story."

Composer Randy Newman also received a nomination for the film's soundtrack.

The other nominees for top animated feature were "Happy Feet," from Warner Bros., a division of Time Warner Inc., "Monster House," from Sony Pictures, a division of Sony Corp., and "Open Season," also from Sony Pictures.

The winner of the Annie Awards has gone on to claim the Oscar for animated feature every year since the Academy Award for animation was created.

Nominated for Best Animated Television Production were "Charlie and Lola," "Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends," "King of the Hill," "The Fairly OddParents," and "Wow! Wow! Wubbzy!"

DID
YOU
KNOW...

NEW YORK—George Clooney on "brutal night" out drinking with Danny DeVito: "I got to the point where I was dumping the shots into, ah, you know, a plant next to me and ... I don't think Danny saw me do that."

AP

SHANGHAI CINEPLEX

1 A GOOD YEAR MTRCB PG-13 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00	3 HAPPY FEET MTRCB GP 12:05, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00
2 THE NATIVITY MTRCB GP 12:20, 2:45, 5:10, 7:35, 10:00	4 CASINO ROYALE MTRCB PG-13 12:55, 4:00, 7:05, 10:10

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MTRCB GP 1:20 5:40 3:40 8:00 10:00

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CASINO ROYALE 007 PG13	THE RETURN PG13 BORAT R18	THE NATIVITY STORY PG13

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SARAH MICHELLE GELLAR

THE RETURN

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DIEGO LLORICO IC MENDOZA BELLIE FLORES
& EDDIE GARCIA

Reyna

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OPENS TODAY!

DIRECTED BY SOXIE TOPICAP GGP

ENTERTAINMENT

Marry a Filipina, Matt told son

By Pocholo Concepcion
Contributor

IN 1964, WHEN MATTHEW MONRO WAS born, his father was a top international act. A succession of hits—beginning with "Portrait of My Love" (1960), "Softly As I Leave You" (1962), "From Russia With Love" (1963), a cover of "Yesterday" (1965), and "Born Free" (1966), among many others—had made Matt Sr. as famous as Frank Sinatra. In fact, he was being referred to as "the British Sinatra."

When he died of liver cancer in 1985, his third son, now called Matt Monroe Jr., accidentally stepped into his shoes.

Eighteen years into a career that thrives on the legacy of his father, Matt Monroe Jr. met the local press on Monday at the new Hyatt Hotel and Casino in Manila, to promote his forthcoming gigs, "Matt Sings Monroe: One Story, A Thousand Memories."

Did you mean to follow in your dad's

MARRY/G2



LIKE FATHER. Matt Monroe Jr. sings his dad's hits.

RODEL ROTON

WEEKEND BOX OFFICE

Top 10 movies at the North American box-office for the three-day weekend beginning Dec 1



Happy Feet - Warner Brothers

TW	LW	Title	Gross	WR
1	1	Happy Feet	\$17.0 mln	3
2	2	Casino Royale	\$15.1 mln	3
3	3	Deja Vu	\$11.0 mln	2
4	☆	The Nativity Story	\$8.0 mln	1
5	4	Deck the Halls	\$6.7 mln	2
6	6	The Santa Clause 3	\$5.0 mln	5
7	5	Borat	\$4.8 mln	5
8	☆	Turistas	\$3.5 mln	1
9	8	Stranger Than Fiction	\$3.4 mln	4
10	☆	Van Wilder 2: The Rise of Taj	\$2.3 mln	1

This Week, Last Week

☆ New release

Based on studio estimates compiled on Sunday

Weeks in Release

REUTERS

ROUNDUP

'Masahista' in France

Brillante Mendoza's "Masahista (The Masseur)" has been released on video in France and French speaking territories in Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands and Switzerland.

The deal with French distributor Swift Distribution was closed at the Toronto International Film Festival last year.

The film will be available in Germany and other German speaking territories early next year, with Salzgeber Edition doing the German release.

It will also be released theatrically in the US next year by Picture This Entertainment.

Film fest best

The Manila Broadcasting Company's "Guess The Best" raffle promo invites listeners of all MBC radio stations to guess the 2006 Metro Manila Film Festival Philippines (MMFFP) Best Picture winner for a chance to win P150,000 in cash.

Entries must be typewritten and must contain the answer, name, address, age, contact number, signature and proof of purchase of any of the following: two empty sachets of any Zonrox detergent (52, 62 or 72 grams) or three sachets of any variant or one bottle any size of Pantene shampoo.

Entries should be placed in a white, legal-sized envelope.

Drop boxes are located at dzRH, 101.1 Yes FM or 90.7 Love Radio, MBC Bldg. Star City, CCP Complex, Roxas Blvd., Pasay City. Provincial entries can be dropped at any nearest MBC station.

Deadline for dropping of entries for weekly draws is every Friday until 12 p.m. of Dec. 29. For the grand draw, deadline is on Dec. 29, 5 p.m.

'Pusang Gala' uncut

"Mga Pusang Gala," top prize first feature winner at the San Francisco Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Film Festival, is now available on video uncut.

Directed and produced by Ellen Ongkeko-Marfil, with screenplay by Jun Lana and Rody Vera, it is based on Lana's Palanca award-winning play and stars Ricky Davao, Irma Adlawan, Reggie Curley, Lauren Novero and Alchris Galura.

Garrison injured

BEVERLY HILLS, California—A sport utility vehicle carrying Lane Garrison of TV's "Prison Break" and three teenagers struck a tree, killing a 17-year-old boy, police said.

Two 15-year-old girls inside the vehicle were also injured, one critically, during the late Saturday night accident, police said. Garrison, 26, had minor injuries.

The vehicle jumped a curb and hit a tree. Authorities were trying to determine who drove the SUV, which was registered to Garrison. AP



"Me, I'm aware of how often I get to talk. For example, when I use Sun, I can talk as many times as I want. When I'm using another network -- even if we're talking -- at the back of my mind, I'm tense."

Martin Mendoza
Martin Mendoza
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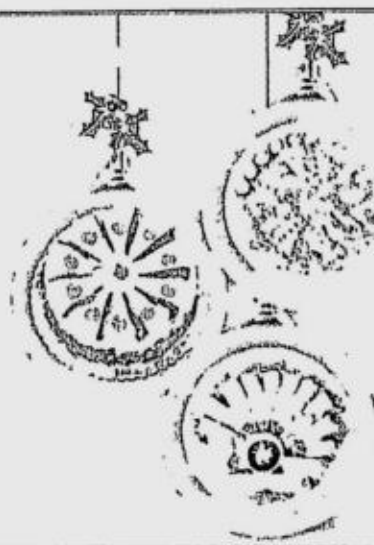
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And then there were three

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre



Since he was the youngest finalist (at only 17), Miguel was gifted but also the rawest talent, and some people believed that it was mainly the votes he generated that kept him in the running.

This was deemed unfair by some, but that's how the show's cookie crumbled, so they just had to accept it.

With only three finalists left, does "Philippine Idol" now have the cream of the crop? Alas, no. With Pow Chavez also sidelined, the show lost one of its best bets.

So, who among Gian, Jan and Mau will come off most strongly at the Araneta Coliseum "final-finals"?

Jan has improved a lot and is now a certified singing hunk, but he's still a bit lightweight in the interpretation and emotion departments, so who knows?

On the other hand, Gian sometimes over-feels and over-interprets, having performed in larger-than-life stage musicals. In fact, the show's jurors have occasionally advised him to go more intimate and "mainstream" and thus become more "accessible" to the general audience. But if he pops it up more, will he lose his unique edge? Decisions, decisions...

As for Mau, she looks more interesting now that she did at the start of the tilt's final round, so

she should thank all the stylists who have jazzed up her clothes, makeup, hairstyles and accessories.

On the other hand, she's been gussied up too much, and sometimes comes across as a fashion victim—and, worse, as a novelty singer—so, no thanks to those stylists, who have been playing around with her much too much.

Well, which way is the girl to go at Araneta? It's time to cut back on the ditzzy looks and remind the public that she's a strong singer first, and a kooky performer only second.

Finally, any crystal-ball predictions on the tilt's ultimate winner? Our guess may only be as good as yours, but we think Gian has the advantage. Well, after the Dec. 9 and 10 finals, we'll know for sure if psychic guesswork is in our stars.

In any case, despite the fact that we've scored our share of "impaired" guesses in the past, we won't quit our day job—for sure!

May the best and most-deserving Philippine Idol emerge triumphant. Isn't that what all this is supposed to be about?



US critics give ...

From page G4

and branding Castle-Hughes' performance one-dimensional. The Washington Post said it was a "drab exercise in glum piety." Variety thought it evoked "memories of dreary Sunday school classes."

But Boston Globe reviewer Ty Burr gave it the thumbs up, calling the gentle approach "the female other to Gibson's Passion." He wrote: "Nativity Story" understands that the larger miracle is that of reproduction and birth—not just that Jesus is born, but that any child is born. Mary is the film's heroine and so are all women." *Paul Handley, AFP*

2) Bold, bloody "Apocalypse"

LOS ANGELES—Mel Gibson's new movie "Apocalypse" drew several good early reviews on Friday from critics who cautioned the thriller set against the end of an ancient Mayan civilization is also extremely violent.

"Blood-and-guts action... audiences should eat this up," said show biz newspaper Daily Variety. Variety critic Todd McCarthy described the film as "remarkable."

Another veteran, Maxim magazine's Pete Hammond, told Reuters: "Say what you will about Mel Gibson, but the guy knows how to get the goods up on the screen. It's a chase movie; it's an action movie...extremely violent."

"Apocalypse" is being closely followed because of Gibson's arrest this summer on drunken driving charges in Malibu, California, outside Los Angeles, and because of his subsequent anti-Semitic tirade against a police officer.

Gibson, 50, later apologized; and industry watchers are curious to see whether his legions of fans and the general public have forgiven him and will turn out for the movie's Dec. 8 US debut.

"I don't think it's going to matter with the core audience," Hammond said.

The movie is being hyped by its distributor The Walt Disney Co. as a "mythic action-adventure." It is subtitled in English, with the characters speaking in an ancient version of a language called Yucatec.

Gibson has a long history of making violent movies that, in the end, have paid off. Before "The Passion of the Christ," his 1995 epic, "Braveheart," another historical thriller, featured many bloody battles and won five Oscars including Best Picture and Best Director for Gibson. *Bob Tourtellotte, Reuters*

Vatican gives 'thumbs up' for "The Nativity Story"

Vatican officials have given the latest Hollywood re-enactment of the Gospel accounts of Jesus' birth a 'thumbs up' after hosting the world premiere Nov. 26.

THE NATIVITY STORY is the first film in history to be screened at the Vatican.

Thunderous applause broke out several times during the film's 90-minute showing, with the most enthusiastic being during the scene of Christ's birth in Bethlehem.

Praise for "The Nativity Story" came from the 1) Vatican newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano; 2) the Vatican's powerful secretary of state, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone; 3) the head of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, U.S. Archbishop John P. Foley.

"It's well done... a great cinematic event," Cardinal Bertone told journalists after seeing the film in the Vatican's Paul VI hall together with more than 7,000 VIP's invited from around the world.

Cardinal Bertone also praised the way the scriptwriter, Mike Rich, crafted "very beautiful dialogue" between the characters, especially in fleshing out Joseph and Mary's relationship and how "they together accepted the mystery of God's plan for them."

The film, which revives the true meaning of the season, comes at a time when "people are afraid of saying 'Merry Christmas'" and makes people "proud to say 'Merry Christmas,'" said U.S. Archbishop John P. Foley.

The archbishop told Catholic News Service he found the film to be "very moving" and thought "the part of Joseph was sensitively scripted and played."

"In particular, Joseph is the example of how an honest and righteous man, who undergoes a humanly upsetting experience -- finding out his betrothed is pregnant -- can still "abandon himself completely to God's plan."

Meanwhile, L'Osservatore Romano called the feature film "graceful and unpretentious," praising it for being a light, happy and imaginative retelling of the story of Joseph, Mary and Christ's birth. *[Carol Glatz, Catholic News Service]*



Pope Benedict XVI, accompanied by Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone (right).

G2

AFTER A NUMBER OF EXCITING, stressful and/or frustrating months, "Philippine Idol" has whittled down its surviving finalists to the final three who will sing and slug it out for the first Pinoy Idol crown (on Dec. 9 and 10) at the Araneta Coliseum.

The "penultimate survivors" are Gian Magdangal, Jan Nieto and Mau Marcelo—not necessarily in that order of potential victory. Throughout the extended competition, that's always been an iffy guesswork situation, especially when it comes to educated guesses.

That's because the tilt's weekly verdicts sometimes appear to be dominated (we aren't saying manipulated) by contestants' strong vote-generating "machines," veritable juggernauts that can roll over the competition with the subtlety of a container van.

But even strong machines do run down, as shown last Monday when the heretofore seemingly invincible Miguel Mendoza finally joined the tilt's also-rans.

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Marry a Filipina, Matt told son

From page G1

footsteps?

I had never sung in public until my father died. I was asked by charity groups to give short talks about him and maybe do a song, just one song. It became a full-time engagement.

What are your fondest memories?

I was in school at the height of his career, but later on I went on the road with him, fetching his water, minding his wardrobe and music sheets. I loved watching him perform. He was a superstar, but

offstage he was just a humble, caring man.

Fame never went to his head?

Maybe in the beginning it had a bit of an effect on him. But he never acted like, "Hey, I'm a star, look at me."

Your dad used to be a bus driver and really struggled to be a singer.

He recorded songs for different labels but at first he didn't sell, so they dropped him. My mom had to work so he could go on singing. Did he like being called the British Frank Sinatra?

I think his singing was much closer to Nat King

Cole. But Sinatra once sent him a telegram saying, "You're one of the greatest singers the world has ever seen." That meant a great deal to my dad. Do you know that every karaoke club in the Philippines should have Matt Monro tunes?

My dad considered the Philippines his second home. He came here so many times in the '60s and '70s, performing to about 40,000 each time.

He told me he felt so much warmth towards the Filipino people. He even told me, "Son, if you really want to be happy, marry a lady from the Philippines!" If anyone out there is listening, I'm single!

("Matt Sings Monro" goes onstage Dec. 6 at the New Pagcor Grand Theater, Parañaque and Dec. 9 at the Hard Rock Café, Makati.)

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THE PICK OF DESTINY

US critics give early thumbs up, thumbs down

1) Film of Jesus' birth story no miracle, say reviewers

WASHINGTON—The Christmas season's first big film, the biblical birth tale of Jesus Christ "The Nativity Story," hit US cinemas Friday to

cheers from Christians, but secular critics said it was more exciting to trudge through the Bible than watch the original Christmas story.

REVIEW

If recent religious-themed films are an indicator, the first feature film ever to premiere at the Vatican—gaining a crucial Roman Catholic Church nod—should do well in the heavily Christian United States whatever pundits write.

"The Nativity Story" has gotten a filip from the news that New Zealander Keisha Castle-Hughes, who plays the 13-year-old immaculately pregnant Virgin Mary, is herself at only 16 pregnant by her 19-year-old boyfriend, who is a carpenter.

The movie was shown last Sunday in the Vatican's Pope Paul VI Hall to an audience of several thousand people including a number of high-ranking cardinals, though not Pope Benedict XVI, who was preparing for a trip to Turkey.

Christian theme

But raven-haired Castle-Hughes, nominated for an Oscar in 2004 for her starring role in "Whale Rider," had anyway said she was too busy to attend the launch in the Holy See.

The much-hyped movie is the newest in a series of Christian-themed films that have captured

KEISHA Castle-Hughes and Hiam Abbass in "The Nativity Story"

US viewers, following in the wake of blockbusters "The Da Vinci Code," a murder mystery branded heresy by some in the Catholic Church, and Mel Gibson's blood-splashed film of Jesus's crucifixion, "The Passion of the Christ." "Da Vinci" took in \$756 million in theaters worldwide and "Passion" earned \$612 million—not including subsequent DVD sales for both, according to BoxOfficeMo-

jo.com, which tracks movie ticket sales.

"Nativity" is directed by Catherine Hardwicke, who made the mother-versus-teenaged daughter film "Thirteen," and produced by New Line Cinema, the same company which produced the Oscar-winning "The Lord of the Rings." But the lack of drama and the unavoidably predictable story—remaining faithful to the Gospels—is its main drawback to some critics.

Influential Christian-oriented movie reviewer Ted Baehr wrote on the Movieguide.org website that "The Nativity Story" a "nearly perfect movie... clearly and consciously evangelistic."

More secular reviewers were less than kind, with the Miami Herald and New York Post calling it boring

US/G2

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